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THE PLAYS OF EURIPIDES  
TRANSLATED BY SHELLEY  
DEAN MILMAN, POTTER  
AND WOODHULL, WITH AN  
INTRODUCTION BY V. R. R.



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THE PLAYS OF  
EURIPIDES  
IN ENGLISH  
IN 2 VOLUMES  
VOLUME I.



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## INTRODUCTIO

THE most poetical translation of Euripides into any tongue, Shelley's radiant version of the *Cyclops*, which opens the present volume, stands easily at the head of all our English plays [from the Greek. Shelley probably made it about 1818-19. Writing to Leigh Hunt, November 1810, he spoke of the Greek plays "tempting him to throw over their perfect and glowing forms the grey veil of my own words." In his *Essays and Studies*<sup>1</sup> Mr Swinburne, after pointing out some of the gaps and errors in Shelley's rendering, due in part to the imperfect text the translator had used, says: "While revising the version of the *Cyclops* I have felt again, and more keenly, the old delight of wonder at its matchless grace of unapproachable beauty, its strength, ease, delicate simplicity and sufficiency."

Mr Swinburne has not by any means spared the good fame of Euripides himself, regarded as a dramatist; and Mr Swinburne's pronouncement is of a temper which, until very recently, might be held typical of the modern critical attitude. But now, thanks to Dr. Verrall, Professor Gilbert Murray and other writers, a very marked reaction has set in.

We might quote opinion, indeed from many brilliant scholars who have helped to reverse the Euripidean current. The old fashion, says Mr Way, of "disparaging his genius (in which Schlegel led the way, giving all the weight of his authority to a sentence which others were too uncritical or too timorous to revise) is now utterly discredited. We have

<sup>1</sup> *Essays and Studies*: Notes on the Text of Shelley, p. 211.



ceased to regard the generations of Greeks and Romans, who loved and revered him, as degenerate fools and blind; *and are at last making some humble efforts to understand them; and to recover their point of view.*"

The argument is continued by Dr. Verrill, to whose remarkable book, *Euripides the Rationalist*, we owe the following passages:—"The right view of Euripides, the capacity of understanding him, is a thing which we moderns have yet to *recover*; and our only way is to begin with recognising that somewhere in our notions about the poet there must be something fundamentally wrong. It should not be possible, as it was not long ago for an English poet bound to the poets of Greece by mutual obligations, to pronounce Euripides no peer of his peers, a dramatist not to be ranked as the equal of those with whom he was actually ranked by the judgment of Athens and all the ancient world, without perceiving that he condemns, not the objects of his criticism, but simply his own comprehension."

Turning to Mr Swinburne: "Euripides, he has told us was a 'botcher.' Doubted or not by the poet, the phrase is apt enough to indicate the nature of modern objections. It appropriately describes the sort of dissatisfaction which we feel after reading, with the modern expositions, some of Euripides' best known and best appreciated works. There is plenty of excellent material; single scenes, or it may be all the scenes, are wrought with undeniable and astonishing power. The murmurs begin when we contemplate the work as a whole: and then the 'botcher' can no longer be kept out of our minds. After all, it would seem, the thing is a patch-work. The excellences of the parts do not seem to subserve any common design, nay, even are mutually repugnant. The author is doubtless a master of his tools, but still, to speak familiarly, he 'does not know what he is driving at.'"

In considering the art of Euripides, and the change in

our feeling for the suggestive, almost interrogative, presentment of his tragic and troubled fables of death and human existence, we have to realise that our own current philosophy, and our own dramatic art, European and English, are changing or have already changed.

"Euripides," says Coleridge, "brought tragedy by many steps nearer to the real world than his predecessors had ever done." In him too the accent of the questioner, the questioning interpreter, is heard above the older fateful accent of Æschylus. We see the movement of Euripides' own mind; we are a party to his dramatic analysis of the hopes and fears that play upon human nature and his own mind, and issue in a kind of conditional nihilism. The strange thing is that Aristophanes, who struck the modern note too in another way, either did not understand the art of Euripides, or, perceiving its tendencies to agnosticism or worse, understood it only too well: and in either case made it the repeated mark of his irrepressible satire. Aristophanes did not either spare the man. He declared in effect that he was not a gentleman, by birth or otherwise: that his mother was a cabbage-seller. Philochorus and others, however, have told us he was of good family. Euripides was born in Salamis, it is recorded, on the very day of the famous battle, 480 B.C., in which Æschylus was one of the battlers. Despite the stigma of Aristophanes it is certain that the boy Euripides was given an education which was costly—for Prodicus, his tutor in rhetoric, was noted for excessive fees. He was trained too by Protagoras and Anaxagoras; learned to paint, and was crowned in his seventeenth year in the Eleusinean games. In the year following he wrote his first play—one among the scores of his lost plays. He went on writing for years before he gained the Olympic Prize for the first time, with his *Hippolytus*. He early seems to have become a favourite playwright of the intellectual coteries. The orators loved him for the forensic power shown in the longer

speeches of his dramatic personages—a power which Aristophanes again laughed to scorn. The praise of Cicero and Quintilian might well console him, however. It is said that many of the ideas in Euripides were derived from his friend and some time friendly master in philosophy, Socrates. Indeed, as Bacon is credited by certain people with having written the better part of Shakespeare's plays, Socrates is said to have been the ghost under the stage of Euripides.

In his life Euripides was never allowed to fall into that complacency which is the death of intellectual art. His first wife, rumour hath it, deceived him; so did his second. Then, like Æschylus, he went or was driven into exile from Athens. This step may have been hastened by a public charge of impiety, which must have ended in imprisonment. From this exile, at the Court of Archelaus, he did not return. His death was strange, tragic as any told of in his plays. In some way, out of revenge or by accident, the hounds of Archelaus were set upon him, and he was frightfully injured and died from his wounds. This was in 406 B.C., when he was a man of seventy-five. Athens begged for his body, but it was buried in Macedon, at Pella.

Of the other translators of Euripides who figure in the present volumes, Robert Potter, who was born in 1721 published his translation of Euripides in 1780, following that of Æschylus in 1777. He had been a country school master and a curate, an industrious versifier and a poor scholar; he had had the signal honour of being attacked by Dr Johnson. He was a man of sixty-seven before an good fortune came to him. "I did not like to promote him earlier," said the Lord Chancellor, "for fear of making him indolent." What we know to-day of Michael Wodhul who supplies the bulk of the plays in the second volume is to be gathered from the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and from his register in the British Museum Catalogue. His translation of Euripides appeared in 1809; he ha

already published original poems in 1772 and 1793. Dean Milman's delightful version of the *Bacchæ*, which by the courtesy of Mr Murray we are able to include, was first published, with the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, in 1865.

At the head of our modern criticism of Euripides, we ought to quote his own line, "If gods do wrong, surely no gods they are." "To understand and enjoy the art of Euripides," says Dr Verrall, "we need not accept his views; but we must know, feel, and remember what they were. *His stories assume that 'the gods' do not exist*; and unless we are alive to this, unless we keep it *always* before us, the best of Euripides, the essence of Euripides must be sealed up from us." And with this may be read Professor Murray's comment on the *Troïles*, as "the first great expression of the spirit of pity for mankind" heard in European literature,— "a principle which has made the most precious and possibly the most destructive elements of innumerable rebellions, revolutions and martyrdoms, and of at least two great religions."

Last of all, let us add that prayer of Euripides, found among his remains, which runs: "Omnipotent God, send Light unto men, that they may know whence their evils come and how they may avoid them."

V. R. R.

## EURIPIDES--TRANSLATIONS

### *Translations of Works*

R. Potter, 1781-83, 1808, 1814, 1832, Nineteen Tragedies and Fragments; M. Woodhull, 1782, 1809; literal trans., T. A. Buckley, 1838, construed literally, Dr Giles, Key to the Classics, 1830, etc.; into Eng. prose, E. P. Coleridge, 1891, etc.; into Eng. verse, A. S. Way, 1894-98.

The *Cyclops* Translation by Shelley, 1819; *Medea* by Mrs Webster; *Alaustis* (A Transcript in Balaustion), R. Browning; *Electra*, by Milman, 1865.

The chief edition of the text is by Dindorf, 1863, 1870; the result of a full investigation of the MSS. is given by Kirchhoff in his editions.

# EURIPIDES

## THE CYCLOPS

### *A Satyric Drama*

#### PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

SILENUS.

CHORUS OF SATYRS.

ULYSSES.

THE CYCLOPS. }

*Silenus.* O Bacchus, what a world of toil, both now  
And ere these limbs were overworn with age,  
Have I endured for thee! First, when thou fled'st  
The mountain-nymphs who nurst thee, driven afar  
By the strange madness Juno sent upon thee;  
Then in the battle of the sons of Earth,  
When I stood foot by foot close to thy side,  
No unpropitious fellow-combatant,  
And driving through his shield my wingèd spear,  
Slew vast Enceladus. Consider now,  
Is it a dream of which I speak to thee?  
By Jove it is not, for you have the trophies!  
And now I suffer more than all before.  
For when I heard that Juno had devised  
A tedious voyage for you, I put to sea  
With all my children quaint in search of you,  
And I myself stood on the beakèd prow  
And fixed the naked mast, and all my boys  
Leaning upon their oars, with splash and strain  
Made white with foam the green and purple sea,—  
And so we sought you, king. We were sailing  
Near Malea, when an eastern wind arose,  
And drove us to this wild Ætnean rock;  
The one-eyed children of the Ocean God,  
The man-destroying Cyclopes inhabit,  
On this wild shore, their solitary caves,  
And one of these, named Polypheme, has caught us  
To be his slaves; and so, for all delight  
Of Bacchic sports, sweet dance and melody,  
We keep this lawless giant's wandering flocks.

My sons indeed, on far declivities,  
 Young things themselves, tend on the youngling sheep,  
 But I remain to fill the water casks,  
 Or sweeping the hard floor, or ministering  
 Some impious and abominable meal  
 To the fell Cyclops. I am wearied of it  
 And now I must scrape up the littered floor  
 With this great iron rake, so to receive  
 My absent master and his evening sheep  
 In a cave neat and clean. Even now I see  
 My children tending the flocks hitherward.  
 Ha! what is this? are your Sicinnian measures  
 Even now the same, as when with dance and song  
 You brought young Bacchus to Althaea's halls?

*Chorus of Satyrs.*

STROPHE.

Where has he of race divine  
 Wandered in the winding rocks?  
 Here the air is calm and fine  
 For the father of the flocks;—  
 Here the grass is soft and sweet,  
 And the river-eddies meet  
 In the trough beside the cave,  
 Bright as in their fountain wave.—  
 Neither here, nor on the dew  
 Of the lawny uplands feeding?  
 Oh, you come!—a stone at you  
 Will I throw to mend your breeding;—  
 Get along, you hornèd thing,  
 Wild, seditious, rambling!

EPODE.

An Iacchic melody  
 To the golden Aphrodite  
 Will I lift, as erst did I  
 Seeking her and her delight,  
 With the Mænads, whose white feet  
 To the music glance and fleet.  
 Bacchus, O beloved, where,  
 Shaking wide thy yellow hair,  
 Wanderest thou alone, afar?  
 To the one-eyed Cyclops, we,

# The Cyclops

3

Who by right thy servants are,  
Minister in misery,  
In these wretched goat-skins clad,  
Far from thy delights and thee.

*Silenus.* Be silent, sons ; command the slaves to drive  
The gathered flocks into the rock-roofed cave.

*Chorus.* Go ! But what needs this serious haste, O father ?

*Silenus.* I see a Grecian vessel on the coast,  
And thence the rowers with some general  
Approaching to this cave.—About their necks  
Hang empty vessels, as they wanted food,  
And water-flasks.—Oh miserable strangers !  
Whence come they, that they know not what and who  
My master is, approaching in ill hour  
The inhospitable roof of Polypheme,  
And the Cycloplan jaw-bone, man-destroying ?  
Be silent, Satyrs, while I ask and hear  
Whence coming, they arrive the Ætnean hill.

*Ulysses.* Friends, can you show me some clear water spring,  
The remedy of our thirst ? Will any one  
Furnish with food seamen in want of it ?  
Ha ! what is this ? We seem to be arrived  
At the blithe court of Bacchus. I observe  
This sportive band of Satyrs near the caves.  
First let me greet the elder.—Hail !

*Silenus.* Hail thou,  
O Stranger ! tell thy country and thy race.

*Ulysses.* The Ithacan Ulysses and the king  
Of Cephalonia.

*Silenus.* Oh ! I know the man,  
Wordy and shrewd, the son of Sisyphus.

*Ulysses.* I am the same, but do not rail upon me, —

*Silenus.* Whence sailing do you come to Sicily ?

*Ulysses.* From Ilion, and from the Trojan toils.

*Silenus.* How touched you not at your paternal shore ?

*Ulysses.* The strength of tempests bore me here by force.

*Silenus.* The self-same accident occurred to me.

*Ulysses.* Were you then driven here by stress of weather ?

*Silenus.* Following the Pirates who had kidnapped Bacchus.

*Ulysses.* What land is this, and who inhabit it ?—

*Silenus.* Ætna, the loftiest peak in Sicily.



*Ulysses.* And are there walls, and tower-surrounded towns?

*Silenus.* There are not.—These lone rocks are bare of men.

*Ulysses.* And who possess the land? the race of beasts?

*Silenus.* Cyclops, who live in caverns, not in houses.

*Ulysses.* Obeying whom? Or is the state popular?

*Silenus.* Shepherds: no one obeys any in aught.

*Ulysses.* How live they? do they sow the corn of Ceres?

*Silenus.* On milk and cheese, and on the flesh of sheep.

*Ulysses.* Have they the Bromian drink from the vine's stream?

*Silenus.* Ah! no; they live in an ungracious land.

*Ulysses.* And are they just to strangers?—hospitable?

*Silenus.* They think the sweetest thing a stranger brings  
Is his own flesh.

*Ulysses.* What! do they eat man's flesh?

*Silenus.* No one comes here who is not eaten up.

*Ulysses.* The Cyclops now—where is he? Not at home?

*Silenus.* Absent on Ætna, hunting with his dogs.

*Ulysses.* Know'st thou what thou must do to aid us hence?

*Silenus.* I know not: we will help you all we can.

*Ulysses.* Provide us food, of which we are in want.

*Silenus.* Here is not anything, as I said, but meat.

*Ulysses.* But meat is a sweet remedy for hunger.

*Silenus.* Cow's milk there is, and store of curdled cheese.

*Ulysses.* Bring out:—I would see all before I bargain.

*Silenus.* But how much gold will you engage to give?

*Ulysses.* I bring no gold, but Bacchic juice.

*Silenus.* Oh joy!

'Tis long since these dry lips were wet with wine.

*Ulysses.* Maron, the son of the god, gave it me.

*Silenus.* Whom I have nursed a baby in my arms.

*Ulysses.* The son of Bacchus, for your clearer knowledge.

*Silenus.* Have you it now?—or is it in the ship?

*Ulysses.* Old man, this skin contains it, which you see.

*Silenus.* Why this would hardly be a mouthful for me.

*Ulysses.* Nay, twice as much as you can draw from thence.

*Silenus.* You speak of a fair fountain, sweet to me.

*Ulysses.* Would you first taste of the unmingled wine?

*Silenus.* 'Tis just—tasting invites the purchaser.

*Ulysses.* Here is the cup, together with the skin.

*Silenus.* Pour: that the draught may fillip my remembrance.

*Ulysses.* See!

*Silenus.* Papaiax! what a sweet smell it has!

# The Cyclops

5

*Ulysses.* You see it then?—

*Silenus.*

By Jove, no? but I smell it.

*Ulysses.* Taste, that you may not praise it in words only.

*Silenus.* Babai! Great Bacchus calls me forth to dance!

Joy! joy!

*Ulysses.*

Did it flow sweetly down your throat?

*Silenus.* So that it tingled to my very nails.

*Ulysses.* And in addition I will give you gold.

*Silenus.* Let gold alohe! only unlock the cask.

*Ulysses.* Bring out some cheeses now, or a young goat.

*Silenus.* That will I do, despising any master.

Yes, let me drink one cup, and I will give

All that the Cyclops feed upon their mountains.<sup>1</sup>

*Chorus.* Ye have taken Troy and laid your hands on Helen?

<sup>1</sup> The following continuation of Silenus's speech, with the further completion of the passage, is from Woodhull's version. As it shows, Shelley adopted the old reading of his text which gave to Silenus the subsequent speech of the Chorus before his re-entrance.—

“I'd from Leucadè, when completely drunk,  
Into the ocean take a lover's leap,  
Shutting my eyes. For he who, when he quaffs  
The mantling bowl, exults not, is a madman.  
Through wine new joys our wanton bosoms fire,  
With eager arms we clasp the yielding fair,  
And in the giddy dance forget each ill  
That heretofore assailed us. So I kiss  
The rich potation; let the stupid Cyclops  
Weep with that central eye which in his front  
Glares horribly.

[*Exit SILENUS.*]

*Chorus.*

Attend: for we must hold

A long confabulation, O Ulysses.

*Ulysses.* We meet each other like old friends.

*Chorus.*

Was Troy

By you subdued? was Helen taken captive?

*Ulysses.* And the whole house of Priam we laid waste.

*Chorus.* When ye had seized on that transcendent fair,

Did ye then all enjoy her in your turn,

Because she loves variety of husbands?

False to her vows, when she the painted greaves

Around the legs of Paris, on his neck

The golden chain, beheld, with love deep smitten,

From Menelaus, best of men, she fled.

Ah! would to Heaven no women had been born

But such as were reserved for my embraces.

*SILENUS returning.*

*Silenus.* See, here are sheep,” etc.

*Ulysses.* And utterly destroyed the race of Priam.

*Silenus.* The wanton wretch! she was bewitched to see  
The many-coloured anklets and the chain  
Of woven gold which girt the neck of Paris,  
And so she left that good man Menelaus.  
There should be no more women in the world  
But such as are reserved for me alone.—  
See, here are sheep, and here are goats, Ulysses,  
Here are unsparing cheeses of pressed milk;  
Take them; depart with what good speed ye may;  
First leaving my reward, the Bacchic dew  
Of joy-inspiring grapes.

*Ulysses.* Ah me! Alas!  
What shall we do? the Cyclops is at hand!  
Old man, we perish! whither can we fly?

*Silenus.* Hide yourselves quick within that hollow rock.

*Ulysses.* 'Twere perilous to fly into the net.

*Silenus.* The cavern has recesses numberless;  
Hide yourself quick.

*Ulysses.* That will I never do!  
The mighty Troy would be indeed disgraced  
If I should fly one man. How many times  
Have I withstood, with shield immovable,  
Ten thousand Phrygians!—if I needs must die,  
Yet will I die with glory;—if I live,  
The praise which I have gained will yet remain.

*Silenus.* What, ho! assistance, comrades, haste, assistance

*The CYCLOPS, SILENUS, ULYSSES; CHORUS.*

*Cyclops.* What is this tumult? Bacchus is not here,  
Nor tympanies nor brazen castanets.  
How are my young lambs in the cavern? Milking  
Their dams or playing by their sides? And is  
The new cheese pressed into the bulrush baskets?  
Speak! I'll beat some of you till you rain tears—  
Look up, not downwards, when I speak to you.

*Silenus.* See! I now gape at Jupiter himself,  
I stare upon Orion and the stars.

*Cyclops.* Well, is the dinner fitly cooked and laid?

*Silenus.* All ready, if your throat is ready too.

*Cyclops.* Are the bowls full of milk besides?

*Silenus.* O'er-brimming;  
So you may drink a tunful if you will.

*Cyclops.* Is it ewe's milk or cow's milk, or both mixed?—

*Silenus.* Both, either; only pray don't swallow me.

*Cyclops.* By no means.—<sup>1</sup>

What is this crowd I see beside the stalls?  
Outlaws or thieves? for near my cavern-home,  
I see my young lambs coupled two by two  
With willow bands; mixed with my cheeses lie  
Their implements; and this old fellow here  
Has his bald head broken with stripes.

*Silenus.* Ah me!  
I have been beaten till I burn with fever.

*Cyclops.* By whom? Who laid his fist upon your head?

*Silenus.* Those men, because I would not suffer them  
To steal your goods.

*Cyclops.* Did not the rascals know  
I am a god, sprung from the race of heaven?

*Silenus.* I told them so, but they bore off your things,  
And ate the cheese in spite of all I said,  
And carried out the lambs—and said, moreover,  
They'd pin you down with a three-cubit collar,  
And pull your vitals out through your one eye,  
Torture your back with stripes, then binding you,  
Throw you as ballast into the ship's hold,  
And then deliver you, a slave, to move  
Enormous rocks, or found a vestibule.

*Cyclops.* In truth? Nay, haste, and place in order quickly  
The cooking knives, and heap upon the hearth,  
And kindle it, a great faggot of wood—  
As soon as they are slaughtered, they shall fill  
My belly, broiling warm from the live coals,  
Or boiled and seethed within the bubbling cauldron.  
I am quite sick of the wild mountain game,  
Of stags and lions I have gorged enough,  
And I grow hungry for the flesh of men.

*Silenus.* Nay, master, something new is very pleasant  
After one thing for ever, and of late  
Very few strangers have approached our cave.

<sup>1</sup> "For ye would foot it in my tortured paunch,  
And kill me with those antics."—WOODHULL

*Ulysses.* Hear, Cyclops, a plain tale on the other side.  
 We, wanting to buy food, came from our ship  
 Into the neighbourhood of your cave, and here  
 This old Silenus gave us in exchange  
 These lambs for wine, the which he took and drank,  
 And all by mutual compact, without force.  
 There is no word of truth in what he says,  
 For slyly he was selling all your store.

*Silenus.* I? May you perish, wretch—

*Ulysses.* If I speak false!

*Silenus.* Cyclops, I swear by Neptune who begot thee,  
 By mighty Triton and by Nereus old,  
 Calypso and the glaucous ocean Nymphs,  
 The sacred waves and all the race of fishes—  
 Be these the witnesses, my dear sweet master,  
 My darling little Cyclops, that I never  
 Gave any of your stores to these false strangers;—  
 If I speak false may those whom most I love,  
 My children, perish wretchedly!

*Chorus.* There stop!

I saw him giving these things to the strangers.  
 If I speak false, then may my father perish,  
 But do not thou wrong hospitality.

*Cyclops.* You lie! I swear that he is juster far  
 Than Rhadamanthus—I trust more in him.  
 But let me ask, whence have ye sailed, O strangers?  
 Who are you? And what city nourished ye?

*Ulysses.* Our race is Ithacan—having destroyed  
 The town of Troy, the tempests of the sea  
 Have driven us on thy land, O Polypheme.

*Cyclops.* What, have ye shared in the unenvied spoil  
 Of the false Helen, near Scamander's stream?

*Ulysses.* The same, having endured a woful toil.

*Cyclops.* Oh, basest expedition! sailed ye not  
 From Greece to Phrygia for one woman's sake?

*Ulysses.* 'Twas the gods' work—no mortal was in fault.  
 But, O great offspring of the ocean-king,  
 We pray thee and admonish thee with freedom,  
 That thou dost spare thy friends who visit thee,  
 And place no impious food within thy jaws.  
 For in the depths of Greece we have upreared  
 Temples to thy great father, which are all

His homes. The sacred bay of Tænarus  
Remains inviolate, and each dim recess  
Scooped high on the Malean promontory,  
And airy Sunium's silver-veined crag,  
Which divine Pallas keeps unprofaned ever,  
The Gerastian asylums, and whate'er  
Within wide Greece our enterprise has kept  
From Phrygian contumely ; and in which  
You have a common care, for you inhabit  
The skirts of Grecian land, under the roots  
Of Ætna and its crags, spotted with fire.  
Turn then to converse under human laws,  
Receive us shipwrecked suppliants, and provide  
Food, clothes, and fire, and hospitable gifts ;  
Nor fixing upon oxen-piercing spits  
Our limbs, so fill your belly and your jaws.  
Priam's wide land has widowed Greece enough ;  
And weapon-wingèd murder heaped together  
Enough of dead, and wives are husbandless,  
And ancient women and gray fathers wail  
Their childless age ;—if you should roast the rest  
And 'tis a bitter feast that you prepare,  
Where then would any turn ? Yet be persuaded  
Forego the lust of your jaw-bone ; prefer  
Pious humanity to wicked will :  
Many have bought too dear their evil joys.

*Silenus.* Let me advise you, do not spare a morsel  
Of all his flesh. If you should eat his tongue  
You would become most eloquent, O Cyclops.

*Cyclops.* Wealth, my good fellow, is the wise man's god,  
All other things are a pretence and boast.  
What are my father's ocean promontories,  
The sacred rocks whereon he dwells, to me ?  
Stranger, I laugh to scorn Jove's thunderbolt,  
I know not that his strength is more than mine.  
As to the rest I care not :—When he pours  
Rain from above, I have a close pavilion  
Under this rock, in which I lie supine,  
Feasting on a roast calf or some wild beast,  
And drinking pans of milk, and gloriously  
Emulating the thunder of high heaven.  
And when the Thracian wind pours down the snow,

I wrap my body in the skins of beasts,  
 Kindle a fire, and bid the snow whirl on.  
 The earth, by force, whether it will or no,  
 Bringing forth grass, fattens my flocks and herds,  
 Which, to what other god but to myself  
 And this great belly, first of deities,  
 Should I be bound to sacrifice? I well know  
 The wise man's only Jupiter is this,  
 To eat and drink during his little day,  
 And give himself no care. And as for those  
 Who complicate with laws the life of man,  
 I freely give them tears for their reward.  
 I will not cheat my soul of its delight,  
 Or hesitate in dining upon you :—  
 And that I may be quit of all demands,  
 These are my hospitable gifts ;—fierce fire  
 And yon ancestral cauldron, which o'erbubbling  
 Shall finely cook your miserable flesh.  
 Creep in !—<sup>1</sup>

*Ulysses.* Ai ! ai ! I have escaped the Trojan toils,  
 I have escaped the sea, and now I fall  
 Under the cruel grasp of one impious man.  
 O Pallas, mistress, goddess, sprung from Jove,  
 Now, now, assist me ! Mightier toils than Troy  
 Are these ;—I totter on the chasms of peril ;—  
 And thou who inhabitest the thrones  
 Of the bright stars, look, hospitable Jove,  
 Upon this outrage of thy deity,  
 Otherwise be considered as no god !

*Chorus (alone).*

For your gaping gulph, and your gullet wide  
 The ravin is ready on every side,  
 The limbs of the strangers are cooked and done,  
 There is boiled meat, and roast meat, and meat  
 from the coal,  
 You may chop it, and tear it, and gnash it for fun,  
 An hairy goat's-skin contains the whole.  
 Let me but escape, and ferry me o'er  
 The stream of your wrath to a safer shore.

<sup>1</sup> "Ye shall adorn my table, and produce  
 Delicious meals to cheer my gloomy cave,  
 Such as a god can relish."

# The Cyclops

11

The Cyclops *Ætnean* is cruel and bold,

He murders the strangers

That sit on his hearth,

And dreads no avengers

To rise from the earth.

He roasts the men before they are cold,

He snatches them broiling from the coal,

And from the cauldron pulls them whole,

And minces their flesh and gnaws their bone

With his cursèd teeth, till all be gone.

Farewell, foul pavilion :

Farewell, rites of dread !

The Cyclops vermilion,

With slaughter uncloying,

Now feasts on the dead,

In the flesh of strangers joying !

*Ulysses.* O Jupiter ! I saw within the cave

Horrible things ; deeds to be feigned in words,

But not to be believed as being done.

*Chorus.* What ! sawest thou the impious Polypheme

Feasting upon your loved companions now ?

*Ulysses.* Selecting two, the plumpest of the crowd,

He grasped them in his hands.—

*Chorus.* Unhappy man !<sup>1</sup>

*Ulysses.* Soon as we came into this craggy place,

Kindling a fire, he cast on the broad hearth

The knotty limbs of an enormous oak,

Three waggon-loads at least, and then he strewed

Upon the ground, beside the red firelight,

His couch of pine leaves ; and he milked the cows,

And pouring forth the white milk, filled a bowl

Three cubits wide and four in depth, as much

As would contain ten amphoræ, and bound it

With ivy wreaths ; then placed upon the fire

A brazen pot to boil, and made red hot

The points of spits, not sharpened with the sickle

But with a fruit tree bough, and with the jaws

Of axes for *Ætnean* slaughterings.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "*Chorus.* How did you bear, O miserable man,  
These cruel outrages ?"—WOODHULL.

<sup>2</sup> I confess I do not understand this.



And when this god-abandoned cook of hell  
Had made all ready, he seized two of us  
And killed them in a kind of measured manner ;  
For he flung one against the brazen rivets  
Of the huge cauldron, and seized the other  
By the foot's tendon, and knocked out his brains  
Upon the sharp edge of the craggy stone :  
Then peeled his flesh with a great cooking-knife  
And put him down to roast. The other's limbs  
He chopped into the cauldron to be boiled.  
And I, with the tears raining from my eyes,  
Stood near the Cyclops, ministering to him ;  
The rest, in the recesses of the cave,  
Clung to the rock like bats, bloodless with fear.  
When he was filled with my companions' flesh,  
He threw himself upon the ground and sent  
A loathsome exhalation from his maw.  
Then a divine thought came to me. I filled  
The cup of Maron, and I offered him  
To taste, and said :—"Child of the Ocean God,  
Behold what drink the vines of Greece produce,  
The exultation and the joy of Bacchus."  
He, satiated with his unnatural food,  
Received it, and at one draught drank it off,  
And taking my hand, praised me :—"Thou hast given  
A sweet draught after a sweet meal, dear guest."  
And I perceiving that it pleased him, filled  
Another cup, well knowing that the wine  
Would wound him soon and take a sure revenge.  
And the charm fascinated him, and I  
Plied him cup after cup, until the drink  
Had warmed his entrails, and he sang aloud  
In concert with my wailing fellow-seamen  
A hideous discord—and the cavern rung.  
I have stolen out, so that if you will  
You may achieve my safety and your own.  
But say, do you desire, or not, to fly  
This uncompanionable man, and dwell  
As was your wont among the Grecian Nymphs  
Within the fanes of your beloved god ?  
Your father there within agrees to it,  
But he is weak and overcome with wine,

## The Cyclops

13

And caught as if with bird-lime by the cup,  
He claps his wings and crows in doting joy.  
You who are young escape with me, and find  
Bacchus your ancient friend ; unsuited he  
To this rude Cyclops.

*Chorus.* Oh my dearest friend,  
That I could see that day, and leave for ever  
The impious Cyclops.<sup>1</sup>

*Ulysses.* Listen then what a punishment I have  
For this fell monster, how secure a flight  
From your hard servitude.

*Chorus.* O sweeter far  
Than is the music of an Asian lyre  
Would be the news of Polypheme destroyed.

*Ulysses.* Delighted with the Bacchic drink he goes  
To call his brother Cyclops—who inhabit  
A village upon Ætna not far off.

*Chorus.* I understand, catching him when alone  
You think by some measure to dispatch him,  
Or thrust him from the precipice.

*Ulysses.* Oh no ;  
Nothing of that kind ; my device is subtle.

*Chorus.* How then ? I heard of old that thou wert wise.

*Ulysses.* I will dissuade him from this plan, by saying  
It were unwise to give the Cyclopes  
This precious drink, which if enjoyed alone  
Would make life sweeter for a longer time.  
When vanquished by the Bacchic power, he sleeps,  
There is a trunk of olive wood within,  
Whose point having made sharp with this good sword  
I will conceal in fire, and when I see  
It is alight, will fix it, burning yet,  
Within the socket of the Cyclops' eye  
And melt it out with fire—as when a man  
Turns by its handle a great augur round,  
Fitting the framework of a ship with beams,  
So will I, in the Cyclops' fiery eye  
Turn round the brand and dry the pupil up.

<sup>1</sup> “ For we long  
Have been deprived of the enlivening bowl,  
Nor entertain a single hope of freedom.”—WOODHULL.

*Chorus.* Joy! I am mad with joy at your device.

*Ulysses.* And then with you, my friends, and the old man,  
We'll load the hollow depth of our black ship,  
And row with double strokes from this dread shore.

*Chorus.* May I, as in libations to a god,  
Share in the blinding him with the red brand?  
I would have some communion in his death.

*Ulysses.* Doubtless: the brand is a great brand to hold.

*Chorus.* Oh! I would lift an hundred waggon-loads,  
If like a wasp's nest I could scoop the eye out  
Of the detested Cyclops.

*Ulysses.* Silence now!  
Ye know the close device—and when I call,  
Look ye obey the masters of the craft.  
I will not save myself and leave behind  
My comrades in the cave: I might escape,  
Having got clear from that obscure recess,  
But 'twere unjust to leave in jeopardy  
The dear companions who sailed here with me.

*Chorus.*

Come! who is first, that with his hand  
Will urge down the burning brand  
Through the lids, and quench and pierce  
The Cyclops' eye so fiery fierce?

*Semichorus I. (Song within.)*

Listen! listen! he is coming,  
A most hideous discord humming,  
Drunken, museless, awkward, yelling,  
Far along his rocky dwelling;  
Let us with some comic spell  
Teach the yet unteachable.  
By all means he must be blinded  
If my council be but minded.

*Semichorus II.*

Happy those made odorous  
With the dew which sweet grapes weep,  
To the village hastening thus,  
Seek the vines that soothe to sleep,  
Having first embraced thy friend,  
There in luxury without end,

With the strings of yellow hair,  
Of thy voluptuous leman fair,  
Shalt sit playing on a bed!—  
Speak what door is openèd?

## *Cyclops.*

Ha! ha! ha! I'm full of wine,  
Heavy with the joy divine,  
With the young feast oversated,  
Like a merchant's vessel freighted  
To the water's edge, my crop  
Is laden to the gullet's top.  
The fresh meadow grass of spring  
Tempt's me forth thus wandering  
To my brothers on the mountains,  
Who shall share the wine's sweet fountains.  
Bring the cask, O stranger, bring!

## *Chorus.*

One with eyes the fairest  
Cometh from his dwelling  
Some one loves thee, rarest,  
Bright beyond my telling.  
In thy grace thou shinest  
Like some nymph divinest,  
In her caverns dewy:—  
All delights pursue thee,  
Soon pied flowers, sweet-breathing,  
Shall thy head be wreathing.

*Ulysses.* Listen, O Cyclops, for I am well skilled  
In Bacchus, whom I gave thee of to drink.  
*Cyclops.* What sort of god is Bacchus then accounted?  
*Ulysses.* The greatest among men for joy of life.  
*Cyclops.* I gulpt him down with very great delight.  
*Ulysses.* This is a god who never injures men.  
*Cyclops.* How does the god like living in a skin?  
*Ulysses.* He is content wherever he is put.  
*Cyclops.* Gods should not have their body in a skin.  
*Ulysses.* If he gives joy, what is his skin to you?  
*Cyclops.* I hate the skin, but love the wine within.  
*Ulysses.* Stay here, now drink, and make your spirit glad.

*Cyclops.* Should I not share this liquour with my brothers?  
*Ulysses.* Keep it yourself, and be more honoured so.

*Cyclops.* I were more useful, giving to my friends.

*Ulysses.* But village mirth breeds contests, broils, and blows

*Cyclops.* When I am drunk none shall lay hands on me.—  
*Ulysses.* A drunken man is better within doors.

*Cyclops.* He is a fool, who drinking, loves not mirth.

*Ulysses.* But he is wise, who drunk, remains at home.

*Cyclops.* What shall I do, Silenus? Shall I stay?

*Silenus.* Stay—for what need have you of pot companions?

*Cyclops.* Indeed this place is closely carpeted  
 With flowers and grass.

*Silenus.* And in the sun-warm noon  
 'Tis sweet to drink. Lie down beside me now,

Placing your mighty sides upon the ground.

*Cyclops.* What do you put the cup behind me for?

*Silenus.* That no one here may touch it.

*Cyclops.* Thievish one!

You want to drink;—here place it in the midst.

And thou, O stranger, tell how art thou called?

*Ulysses.* My name is Nobody. What favour now

Shall I receive to praise you at your hands?

*Cyclops.* I'll feast on you the last of your companions.

*Ulysses.* You grant your guest a fair reward, O Cyclops.

*Cyclops.* Ha! what is this? Stealing the wine, you  
 rogue!

*Silenus.* It was this stranger kissing me because  
 I looked so beautiful.

*Cyclops.* You shall repent

For kissing the coy wine that loves you not.

*Silenus.* By Jupiter! you said that I am fair.

*Cyclops.* Pour out, and only give me the cup full.

*Silenus.* How is it mixed? let me observe.

*Cyclops.* Curse you!

Give it me so.

*Silenus.* Not till I see you wear

That coronal, and taste the cup to you.

*Cyclops.* Thou wily traitor!

*Silenus.* But the wine is sweet.

Ay, you will roar if you are caught in drinking.

*Cyclops.* See now, my lip is clean and all my beard.

*Silenus.* Now put your elbow right and drink again.  
As you see me drink— . . .<sup>1</sup>

*Cyclops.* How now?

*Silenus.* Ye gods, what a delicious gulp!

*Cyclops.* Guest, take it ;—you pour out the wine for me.

*Ulysses.* The wine is well accustomed to my hand.

*Cyclops.* Pour out the wine!

*Ulysses.* I pour ; only be silent.

*Cyclops.* Silence is a hard task to him who drinks.

*Ulysses.* Take it and drink it off ; leave not a dreg.

Oh, that the drinker died with his own draught!

*Cyclops.* Papai! the vine must be a sapient plant.

*Ulysses.* If you drink much after a mighty feast,  
Moistening your thirsty maw, you will sleep well ;  
If you leave aught, Bacchus will dry you up.

*Cyclops.* Ho! ho! I can scarce rise. What pure delight!  
The heavens and earth appear to whirl about  
Confusedly. I see the throne of Jove  
And the clear congregation of the gods.  
Now if the Graces tempted me to kiss  
I would not, for the loveliest of them all  
I would not leave this Ganymede.

*Silenus.* Polypheme,

I am the Ganymede of Jupiter.

*Cyclops.* By Jove you are ; I bore you off from Dardanus.<sup>2</sup>

## Ulysses and the Chorus.

*Ulysses.* Come, boys of Bacchus, children of high race,  
This man within is folded up in sleep,  
And soon will vomit flesh from his fell maw ;  
The brand under the shed thrusts out its smoke,  
No preparation needs, but to burn out  
The monster's eye ;—but bear yourselves like men.

*Chorus.* We will have courage like the adamant rock,  
All things are ready for you here ; go in,

"and imitate  
My every gesture."—WOODHULL.

[Exit CYCLOPS.]

*Silenus.* Ruin awaits me.

*Chorus.* Dost thou loathe him now?

*Silenus.* Ah me! I from this sleep shall soon behold  
The most accursed effects."—WOODHULL.

Before our father shall perceive the noise.

*Ulysses.* Vulcan, Ætnean king! burn out with fire  
The shining eye of this thy neighbouring monster!  
And thou, O sleep, nursling of gloomy night,  
Descend unmixed on this god-hated beast,  
And suffer not Ulysses and his comrades,  
Returning from their famous Trojan toils,  
To perish by this man, who cares not either  
For god or mortal; or I needs must think  
That Chance is a supreme divinity,  
And things divine are subject to her power.

*Chorus.*

Soon a crab the throat will seize  
Of him who feeds upon his guest,  
Fire will burn his lamp-like eye  
In revenge of such a feast!  
A great oak stump now is lying  
In the ashes yet undying.  
Come, Maron, come!  
Raging let him fix the doom,  
Let him tear the eyelid up  
Of the Cyclops—that his cup  
May be evil!  
Oh! I long to dance and revel  
With sweet Bromian, long desired,  
In loved ivy wreaths attired;  
Leaving this abandoned home—  
Will the moment ever come?

*Ulysses.* Be silent, ye wild things! Nay, hold your peace,  
And keep your lips quite close; dare not to breathe,  
Or spit, or e'en wink, lest ye wake the monster,  
Until his eye be tortured out with fire.

*Chorus.* Nay, we are silent, and we chaw the air.

*Ulysses.* Come now, and lend a hand to the great stake  
Within—it is delightfully red hot.

*Chorus.* You then command who first should seize the stake  
To burn the Cyclops' eye, that all may share  
In the great enterprise.

*Semi. I.* We are too far,  
We cannot at this distance from the door  
Thrust fire into his eye.

*Semi. II.*

And we just now

Have become lame ; cannot move hand or foot.

*Chorus.* The same thing has occurred to us,—our ankles  
Are sprained with standing here, I know not how.

*Ulysses.* What, sprained with standing still ?

*Chorus.* And there is dust  
Or ashes in our eyes, I know not whence.

*Ulysses.* Cowardly dogs ! ye will not aid me then ?

*Chorus.* With pitying my own back and my back bone,  
And with not wishing all my teeth knocked out,  
This cowardice comes of itself—but stay,  
I know a famous Orphic incantation  
To make the brand stick of its own accord  
Into the skull of this one-eyed son of Earth.

*Ulysses.* Of old I knew ye thus by nature ; now  
I know ye better.—I will use the aid  
Of my own comrades—yet though weak of hand  
Speak cheerfully, that so ye may awaken  
The courage of my friends with your blithe words.

*Chorus.* This I will do with peril of my life,  
And blind you with my exhortations, Cyclops.

Hasten and thrust,  
And parch up to dust,  
The eye of the beast,  
Who feeds on his guest.  
Burn and blind  
The Ætnean hind !  
Scoop and draw,  
But beware lest he claw  
Your limbs near his maw.

*Cyclops.* Ah me ! my eyesight is parched up to cinders.

*Chorus.* What a sweet pæan ! sing me that again !

*Cyclops.* Ah me ! indeed, what woe has fallen upon me !  
But wretched nothings, think ye not to flee  
Out of this rock ; I, standing at the outlet,  
Will bar the way and catch you as you pass.

*Chorus.* What are you roaring out, Cyclops ?

*Cyclops.* I perish !

*Chorus.* For you are wicked.

*Cyclops.* And besides miserable.

*Chorus.* What, did you fall into the fire when drunk ?

*Cyclops.* 'Twas Nobody destroyed me.



## Euripides

- Chorus.* Why then no one  
Can be to blame.
- Cyclops.* I say 'twas Nobody  
Who blinded me.
- Chorus.* Why then you are not blind.
- Cyclops.* I wish you were as blind as I am.
- Chorus.* Nay,  
It cannot be that no one made you blind.
- Cyclops.* You jeer me ; where, I ask, is Nobody ?
- Chorus.* Nowhere, O Cyclops.
- Cyclops.* It was that stranger ruined me :—the wretch  
First gave me wine and then burnt out my eye,  
For wine is strong and hard to struggle with.  
Have they escaped, or are they yet within ?
- Chorus.* They stand under the darkness of the rock  
And cling to it.
- Cyclops.* At my right hand or left ?
- Chorus.* Close on your right.
- Cyclops.* Where ?
- Chorus.* Near the rock itself.
- Cyclops.* You have them.
- Cyclops.* Oh, misfortune on misfortune !  
I've cracked my skull.
- Chorus.* Now they escape you there.
- Cyclops.* Not there, although you say so.
- Chorus.* Not on that side.
- Cyclops.* Where then ?
- Chorus.* They creep about you on your left.
- Cyclops.* Ah ! I am mocked ! They jeer me in my ills.
- Chorus.* Not there ! he is a little there beyond you.
- Cyclops.* Detested wretch ! where are you ?
- Ulysses.* Far from you  
I keep with care this body of Ulysses.
- Cyclops.* What do you say ? You proffer a new name.
- Ulysses.* My father named me so ; and I have taken  
A full revenge for your unnatural feast ;  
I should have done ill to have burned down  
Troy  
And not revenged the murder of my comrades.
- Cyclops.* Ai ! ai ! the ancient oracle is accomplished ;  
It said that I should have my eyesight blinded  
By you coming from Troy, yet it foretold

## The Cyclops

21

That you should pay the penalty for this  
By wandering long over the homeless sea.

*Ulysses.* I bid thee weep—consider what I say,  
I go towards the shore to drive my ship  
To mine own land, o'er the Sicilian wave.

*Cyclops.* Not so, if whelming you with this huge stone  
I can crush you and all your men together ;  
I will descend upon the shore, though blind,  
Groping my way adown the steep ravine.

*Chorus.* And we, the shipmates of Ulysses now,  
Will serve our Bacchus all our happy lives.

# HECUBA

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

POLYDORE'S GHOST.

HECUBA.

CHORUS OF CAPTIVE TROJAN

DAMES.

POLYXENA.

ULYSSES.

FEMALE ATTENDANT OF HECUBA

AGAMEMNON.

POLYMESTOR.

TALTHYBIUS.

*Scene.*—THE THRACIAN CHERSONESUS.

### THE GHOST OF POLYDORE.

LEAVING the cavern of the dead, and gates  
Of darkness, where from all the gods apart  
Dwells Pluto, come I Polydore, the son  
Of Hecuba from royal Cisseus sprung,  
And Priam, who, when danger threatened Troy,  
Fearing his city by the Grecian arms  
Would be laid low in dust, from Phrygia's realm  
In privacy conveyed me to the house  
Of Polymestor, of his Thracian friend,  
Who tills the Chersonesus' fruitful soil,  
Ruling a nation famed for generous steeds ;  
But secretly, with me, abundant gold  
My father sent, that his surviving children  
Might lack no sustenance, if Ilion's walls  
Should by the foe be levelled with the ground.  
I was the youngest of all Priam's sons,  
By stealth he therefore sent me from the realm ;  
Nor could my feeble arm sustain the shield,  
Or launch the javelin ; but while yet entire  
Each ancient landmark on our frontiers stood,  
The turrets of the Phrygian state remained  
Unshaken, and my brother Hector's spear  
Prospered in battle ; nurtured by the man  
Of Thrace, my father's friend, I, wretched youth,  
Grew like a vigorous scion. But when Troy,  
When Hector failed, when my paternal dome

Was from its basis rent, and Priam's self,  
My aged father, at the altar bled  
Which to the gods his pious hands had reared,  
Butchered by curst Achilles' ruthless son ;  
Me, his unhappy guest, my father's friend  
Slew for the sake of gold, and having slain,  
Plunged me into the sea, that he might keep  
Those treasures in his house. My breathless corse,  
In various eddies by the rising waves  
Of ocean tost, lies on the craggy shore,  
Unwept, unburied. But by filial love  
For Hecuba now prompted, I ascend  
A disembodied ghost, and thrice have seen  
The morning dawn, to Chersonesus land,  
Since my unhappy mother came from 'Troy.  
But all the Grecian army, in their ships,  
Here anchoring on this coast of Thrace remain  
Inactive ; for appearing on his tomb  
Achilles, Peleus' son, restrained the troops,  
Who homeward else had steered their barks, and  
claims

Polyxena my sister, as a victim  
Most precious at his sepulchre to bleed ;  
And her will he obtain, nor will his friends  
Withhold the gift ; for fate this day decrees  
That she shall die : my mother must behold  
Two of her slaughtered children's corpses, mine,  
And this unhappy maid's—that in a tomb  
I may be lodged, where the firm beach resists  
The waves, I to her servant will appear,  
Since from the powers of hell I have obtained  
The privilege of honourable interment,  
And that a mother's hand these rites perform :  
I shall accomplish what my soul desired.  
But on the aged Hecuba's approach,  
Far hence must I retreat ; for from the tent  
Of Agamemnon she comes forth, alarmed  
By my pale spectre. O my wretched mother,  
How art thou torn from princely roofs to view  
This hour of servitude ! what sad reverse  
Of fortune ! some malignant god hath balanced  
Thy present misery 'gainst thy former bliss. [Exit.

## Euripides

HECUBA, *attended by* TROJAN DAMSELS.

*Hecuba.* Forth from these doors, ye gentle virgins, lead me  
 A weak old woman : O ye nymphs of Troy,  
 Support your fellow-servant, once your queen  
 Bear me along, uphold my tottering frame.  
 And take me by this aged hand ; your arm  
 Shall be my staff to lean on, while I strive  
 My tardy pace to quicken. O ye lightnings  
 Of Jove, O Night in tenfold darkness wrapt,  
 By such terrific phantoms from my couch  
 Why am I scared ? Thou venerable earth,  
 Parent of dreams that flit on raven wing ;  
 The vision I abhor, which I in sleep  
 This night have seen, relating to my son,  
 Who here is fostered in the Thracian realm  
 And to Polyxena my dearest daughter ;  
 For I too clearly saw and understood  
 The meaning of that dreadful apparition ;  
 Ye tutelary gods of this domain,  
 Preserve the only anchor of our house,  
 My son, who dwells in Thracian fields, o'erspread  
 With snow, protected by his father's friend.  
 Some fresh event awaits us, and ere long  
 By accents most unwelcome shall the ear  
 Of wretchedness be wounded : till this hour,  
 By such incessant horrors, such alarms,  
 My soul was never seized. Where shall I view  
 The soul of Helenus, on whom the god  
 Bestowed prophetic gifts, ye Phrygian maids ?  
 Where my Cassandra to unfold the dream ?  
 With bloody fangs I saw a wolf, who slew  
 A dappled hind, which forcibly he tore  
 From these reluctant arms, and what increased  
 My fears, was this—Achilles' spectre stalked  
 Upon the summit of his tomb, and claimed  
 A gift, some miserable Trojan captive.  
 You therefore I implore, ye gods, avert  
 Such doom from my loved daughter.

CHORUS, HECUBA.

*Chorus.*

I to thee,

To thee, O Hecuba, with breathless speed,

Fly from the tents of our imperious lords,  
Where I by lot have been assigned, and doomed  
To be a slave, driven by the pointed spear  
From Troy ; by their victorious arms the Greeks  
Have made me captive : nothing can I bring,  
Thy sorrows to alleviate ; but to thee  
Laden with heaviest tidings am I come  
The herald of affliction. For 'tis said,  
Greece in full council hath resolved thy daughter  
A victim to Achilles shall be given.  
The warrior mounting on his tomb, thou know'st,  
Appeared in golden armour, and restrained  
The fleet just ready to unfurl its sails,  
Exclaiming, " Whither would ye steer your course,  
Ye Greeks, and leave no offering on my grave ? "  
A storm of violent contention rose,  
And two opinions in the martial synod  
Of Greece went forth ; the victim, some maintained,  
Ought on the sepulchre to bleed, and some  
Such offering disapproved. But Agamemnon,  
Who shares the bed of the Prophetic Dame,  
Espoused thy interest ; while the sons of Theseus,  
Branches from the Athenian root, discussed  
The question largely in each point of view,  
But in the same opinion both concurred,  
And said that never should Cassandra's love  
To great Achilles' valour be preferred :  
Equally balanced the debate still hung,  
When he, that crafty orator, endued  
With sweetest voice, the favourite of the crowd,  
Laertes' son, persuaded all the host,  
Not to reject the first of Grecian chiefs,  
And yield the preference to a victim slave :  
Lest some vindictive ghost, before the throne  
Of Proserpine arising, might relate  
How Greece, unmindful of her generous sons,  
Who nobly perished for their native land,  
From Ilion's fields departed. In a moment  
Ulysses will come hither, from thy breast  
And aged arms to drag the tender maid.  
But to the temples, to the altars, go,  
In suppliant posture clasp Atrides' knees,

Invoke the gods of heaven and hell beneath,  
 For either thou wilt by thy prayers avert  
 Thy daughter's fate, else must thou at the tomb  
 Behold the virgin fall distained with gore,  
 And gushing from her neck a crimson stream.

*Hecuba.* Wretch that I am! ah me! what clamorous sounds,  
 What words, what plaints, what dirges shall I find,  
 Expressive of the anguish which I feel?  
 Opprest by miserable old age, bowed down  
 Under a load of servitude too heavy  
 To be endured: what sanctuary remains,  
 What valiant race, what city will protect me?  
 The hoary Priam is no more, my sons  
 Are now no more. Or to this path, or that,  
 Shall I direct my steps? or whither go?  
 Where shall I find some tutelary god?  
 Ye Phrygian captives, messengers of ill,  
 O ye who with unwelcome tidings fraught,  
 Come hither, ye have ruined me. The orb  
 Of day shall never rise to fill this breast  
 With any comfort more. Ye luckless feet,  
 Bear an infirm old woman to the tent  
 Of our captivity. Come forth, my daughter,  
 Come forth and listen to thy mother's voice,  
 That thou may'st know the rumour I have heard,  
 In which thy life is interested.

POLYXENA, HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Polyx.*

O mother,

What mean you by those shrieks? what fresh event  
 Proclaiming, from my chamber, like a bird,  
 Have you constrained me, urged by fear, to speed  
 My flight?

*Hecuba.* Ah, daughter!

*Polyx.*

With foreboding voice,

Why do you call me? these are evil omens.

*Hecuba.* Alas! thy life, Polyxena.

*Polyx.*

Speak out,

Nor aggravate the horrors yet untold

By long suspense. I fear, O mother, much

I fear. What mean those oft repeated groans?

*Hecuba.* Thou child of a most miserable mother!

*Polyx.* Why speak you thus?

*Hecuba.* The Greeks, with one consent,  
Resolve that on the tomb of Peleus' son  
Thou shalt be sacrificed.

*Polyx.* What boundless woes  
Are these which to your daughter you announce!  
Yet, O my mother, with the tale proceed.

*Hecuba.* Of a most horrible report I speak,  
Which says, that, by the suffrage of the Greeks,  
It is resolved to take away thy life.

*Polyx.* O, my unhappy mother, doomed to suffer  
Wrongs the most dreadful, doomed to lead a life  
Of utter wretchedness: what grievous curse,  
Such as no language can express, on you  
Hath some malignant demon hurled! no more  
Can I, your daughter, share the galling yoke  
Of servitude with your forlorn old age;  
For like some lion's whelp, or heifer bred  
Upon the mountains, hurried from your arms  
Shall you behold me, and with severed head  
Consigned to Pluto's subterraneous realms  
Of darkness, there among the silent dead,  
Wretch that I am, shall I be laid. These tears  
Of bitter lamentation I for you,  
For you, O mother, shed; but my own life  
I heed not, nor the shame, nor fatal stroke,  
For I in death a happier lot obtain.

*Chorus.* To thee, O Hecuba, with hasty step  
Behold Ulysses some new message brings.

ULYSSES, HECUBA, POLYXENA, CHORUS.

*Ulysses.* Though I presume the counsels of our troops  
And their decision are already known  
To thee, O woman, yet must I repeat  
Th' unwelcome tidings; at Achilles' tomb,  
Polyxena, thy daughter, have the Greeks  
Resolved to slay; me to attend the virgin  
Have they commanded: but Achilles' son  
Is at the altar destined to preside,  
And be the priest. Know'st thou thy duty then?  
Constrain us not to drag her from those arms  
With violence, nor strive with me; but learn



The force of thy inevitable woes :  
 For there is wisdom, e'en when we are wretched,  
 In following reason's dictates.

Now, alas !

*Hecuba.*

It seems a dreadful struggle is at hand,  
 With groans abounding and unnumbered tears.  
 I died not at the time I ought to die,  
 Neither did Jove destroy me ; he still spares  
 My life, that I may view fresh woes, yet greater,  
 Wretch that I am, than all my former woes.  
 But if a slave, who not with bitter taunt,  
 Or keen reproach, her questions doth propose,  
 Might speak to freemen, now 'tis time for you  
 To cease, and give me audience while I ask——

*Ulysses.* Allowed, proceed ; for I without reluctance  
 Will grant thee time.

*Hecuba.*

Remember you when erst  
 You came to Troy a spy, in tattered garb  
 Disguised, and from your eyes upon your beard  
 Fell tears extorted by the dread of death ?

*Ulysses.* I well remember : for by that event  
 My inmost heart was touched.

*Hecuba.*

But Helen knew you,  
 And told me only.

*Ulysses.*

I can ne'er forget  
 Into what danger I was fallen.

*Hecuba.*

My knees  
 You in a lowly posture did embrace.

*Ulysses.* And to thy garment clung with faltering hand.

*Hecuba.* At length I saved and from our land dismissed you.

*Ulysses.* Hence I the solar beams yet view.

*Hecuba.*

What language  
 Did you then hold, when subject to my power ?

*Ulysses.* Full many were the words which I devised  
 To save my life.

*Hecuba.*

Doth not your guilt appear  
 From your own counsels ? Though your tongue avo  
 The generous treatment you from me received  
 No benefit on me do you confer,  
 But strive to harm me. O ungrateful race  
 Of men, who aim at popular applause  
 By your smooth speeches ; would to Heaven I ne

Had known you, for ye heed not how ye wound  
Your friends, whene'er ye can say ought to win  
The crowd. But what pretence could they devise  
For sentencing this virgin to be slain?  
Are they constrained by fate, with human victims,  
To drench the tomb on which they rather ought  
To sacrifice the steer? or doth Achilles  
Demand her life with justice, to retaliate  
Slaughter on them who slaughtered? But to him  
Hath she done nought injurious. He should claim  
Helen as victim at his tomb, for she  
His ruin caused by leading him to Troy.  
If it was needful that some chosen captive  
Distinguished by transcendent charms should die,  
We were not meant; for the perfidious daughter  
Of Tyndarus is most beauteous, and her crimes  
To ours at least are equal. Justice only  
In this debate supports me: hear how large  
The debt which 'tis your duty to repay  
On my petition: you confess you touched  
My hand, and these my aged cheeks, in dust  
Grovvelling a suppliant; yours I now embrace,  
From you the kindness which I erst bestowed  
Again implore, and sue to you: O tear not  
My daughter from these arms, nor slay the maid:  
Sufficient is the number of the slain.  
In her I yet rejoice, in her forget  
My woes; she, for the loss of many children,  
Consoles me, I in her a country find,  
A nurse, a staff, a guide. The mighty ought not  
To issue lawless mandates, nor should they,  
On whom propitious fortunes now attend,  
Think that their triumphs will for ever last:  
For I was happy once, but am no more,  
My bliss all vanished in a single day.  
Yet, O my friend, revere and pity me,  
Go to the Grecian host, admonish them  
How horrible an action 'twere to slay  
These captive women whom at first ye spared,  
And pitied when ye dragged them from the altars.  
For by your laws 'tis equally forbidden  
To spill the blood of freemen, or of slave.

Although you weakly argue, will your rank  
 Convince them : for the self-same speech when, uttered  
 By the ignoble, and men well esteemed,  
 Comes not with equal force.

*Chorus.* The human soul  
 Is not so flinty as to hear the woes  
 And plaintive strains thou lengthen'st out, nor shed  
 The sympathizing tear.

*Ulysses.* To me attend,  
 O Hecuba, nor through resentment deem  
 That from a foe such counsels can proceed :  
 I am disposed to save thee, and now hold  
 No other language : but will not deny  
 What I to all have said ; since Troy is taken,  
 On the first warrior of the host who asks  
 A victim, should thy daughter be bestowed.  
 The cause why many cities are diseased  
 Is this : the brave and generous man obtains  
 No honourable distinction to exalt him  
 Above the coward. But from us, O woman,  
 Achilles claims such homage, who for Greece  
 Died nobly. Is not this a foul reproach,  
 If, while our friends yet live, we seek their aid,  
 But after death ungratefully forget  
 Past services ? Should armed bands once more  
 Assemble, and renew the bloody strife,  
 Will not some hardy veteran thus exclaim :  
 " Shall we go forth to battle, or indulge  
 The love of life, now we have seen the dead  
 Obtain no honours ? " While from day to day  
 I live, though I have little, yet that little  
 For every needful purpose will suffice.  
 But may conspicuous trophies o'er my grave  
 Be planted, for such tribute to my name  
 Will last to after-ages. If thou call  
 Thy sufferings piteous, hear what in reply  
 We have to urge ; amidst the Grecian camp  
 Are many aged dames, as miserable  
 As thou art, with full many a hoary sire,  
 And weeping bride, torn from her valiant lord.  
 O'er whose remains hath Ida's dust been strewn.  
 Support thy woes : if with mistaken zeal

We have resolved to honour the deceased,  
 Our crime is ignorance : but ye barbarians  
 Pay no distinction to your friends, no homage  
 To the illustrious dead ; hence Greece prevails ;  
 But ye from your pernicious counsels reap  
 The bitter fruits they merit.

*Chorus.* Ah, what ills

Ever attend the captive state, subdued  
 By brutal violence, and forced t' endure  
 Unseemly wrongs.

*Hecuba.* Those words I vainly spoke

Thy slaughter to avert, in air were lavished ;  
 But, O my daughter, if thy power exceed  
 Thy mother's, like the nightingale send forth  
 Each warbled note, to save thy life, excite,  
 By falling at his knees, Ulysses' pity,  
 And on this ground, because he too hath children,  
 Entreat him to compassionate thy doom.

*Polyx.* I see thee, O Ulysses, thy right hand  
 Beneath thy robe concealing, see thee turn  
 Thy face away, lest I should touch thy beard.  
 Be of good cheer ; I'll not call down the wrath  
 Of Jove who guards the suppliant, but will follow  
 Thy steps, because necessity ordains  
 And 'tis my wish to die ; if I were loth,  
 I should appear to be an abject woman,  
 And fond of life ; but what could lengthened life  
 Avail to me, whose father erst was lord  
 Of the whole Phrygian realm ? Thus first I drew  
 My breath beneath the roofs of regal domes ;  
 Then was I nurtured with the flattering hope  
 That I should wed a monarch, and arrive  
 At the proud mansion of some happy youth.  
 Ill-fated princess, thus I stood conspicuous  
 Amid the dames and brightest nymphs of Troy,  
 In all but immortality a goddess ;  
 But now am I a slave, and the first cause  
 Which makes me wish to die, is that abhorred  
 Unwonted name ; else some inhuman lord  
 With gold perchance might purchase me, the  
 sister  
 Of Hector, and full many a valiant chief,

Might make me knead the bread, and sweep the floor,  
 And ply the loom, and pass my abject days  
 In bitterness of woe : some servile mate  
 Might bring dishonour to my bed, though erst  
 I was deemed worthy of a sceptred king :  
 Not thus. These eyes shall to the last behold  
 The light of freedom. O ye shades receive  
 A princess. Lead me on then, O Ulysses,  
 And as thou lead'st despatch me, for no hope,  
 No ground for thinking, I shall e'er be happy,  
 Can I discern : yet hinder not by word  
 Or deed the steadfast purpose I have formed ;  
 But, O my mother, in this wish concur  
 With me, that I may die ere I endure  
 Such wrongs as suit not my exalted rank.  
 For whoso'er hath not been used to taste  
 Of sorrow, bears indeed the galling yoke,  
 Yet is he grieved, when he to such constraint  
 Submits his neck : but they who die may find  
 A bliss beyond the living ; for to live  
 Ignobly were the utmost pitch of shame.

*Chorus.* A great distinction, and among mankind  
 The most conspicuous, is to spring from sires  
 Renowned for virtue ; generous souls hence raise  
 To heights sublimer an ennobled name.

*Hecuba.* Thou, O my daughter, well indeed hast spoken ;  
 Yet these exalted sentiments of thine  
 To me will cause fresh grief ; but, if the son  
 Of Peleus must be gratified, and Greece  
 Avoid reproach, Ulysses, slay not her,  
 But me, conducting to Achilles' tomb,  
 Transpierce with unrelenting hand. I bore  
 Paris, whose shafts the son of Thetis slew.

*Ulysses.* Not thee for victim, O thou aged dame,  
 But her, Achilles' spectre hath demanded.

*Hecuba.* Yet slay me with my daughter ; so shall earth,  
 And the deceased who claims these hateful rites,  
 A twofold portion drink of human gore.

*Ulysses.* Enough in her of victims ; let no more  
 Be added : would to Heaven we were not bound  
 To offer up this one !

*Hecuba.* The dread behests

Of absolute necessity require,  
That with my daughter I should die.

*Ulysses.* What mean'st thou?  
I know no lord to counteract my will.

*Hecuba.* Her, as the ivy clings around the oak,  
Will I embrace.

*Ulysses.* Not if to wiser counsels  
Thou yield just deference.

*Hecuba.* I will ne'er consent  
My daughter to release.

*Ulysses.* Nor will I go,  
And leave her here.

*Polyx.* Attend to me, my mother,  
And, O thou offspring of Laertes, treat  
The just emotions of parental wrath  
With greater mildness. But, O hapless woman,  
Contend not with our conquerors. Would you fall  
Upon the earth and wound your aged limbs,  
Thrust from me forcibly, by youthful arms  
Torn with disgrace away? Provoke not wrongs  
Unseemly; O, my dearest mother, give  
That much-loved hand, and let me join my cheek  
To yours; for I no longer shall behold  
The radiant orb of yonder sun. Now take  
A last farewell, O you who gave me birth;  
I to the shades descend.

*Hecuba.* But I the light  
Am doomed to view, and still remain a slave.

*Polyx.* Unwedded, reft of promised bridal joys.

*Hecuba.* Thou, O my daughter, claim'st the pitying tear;  
But I am a most miserable woman.

*Polyx.* There shall I sleep among the realms beneath,  
From you secluded.

*Hecuba.* What resource, alas I  
For me, the wretched Hecuba is left?  
Where shall I finish this detested life?

*Polyx.* Born free, I die a slave.

*Hecuba.* I too, bereft  
Of all my children.

*Polyx.* What commands to Hector,  
Or to your aged husband, shall I bear?

*Hecuba.* Tell them I of all women am most wretched.

*Polyx.* Ye paps which sweetly nourished me——

Alas!

*Hecuba.* My child's untimely miserable fate.

*Polyx.* Farewell, my mother, and my dear Cassandra

*Hecuba.* To others in that language speak; be theirs  
The happiness thy mother cannot taste.

*Polyx.* And thou, my brother Polydore, who dwell'st  
Among the Thracians, famed for generous steeds——

*Hecuba.* If yet he live; but this I greatly doubt,  
Because I am in all respects so wretched.

*Polyx.* He lives, and when the hour of death is come,  
Will close your eyes.

*Hecuba.* I'm prematurely dead  
While yet alive, bowed down to earth by woe.

*Polyx.* Now bear me hence, Ulysses, o'er my face  
Casting a veil: for ere I at the altar  
Am slain, this heart is melted by the plaints  
Of my dear mother, and my tears augment  
Her sorrows. O thou radiant light; for still  
Am I permitted to invoke thy name,  
But can enjoy thee only till I meet  
The lifted sword, and reach Achilles' tomb.

[*Exeunt* ULYSSES and POLYXENA.]

*Hecuba.* I faint, my limbs are all unnerved; return,  
My daughter, let me touch that hand once more,  
Leave me not childless. O, my friends, I perish;  
Ah, would to Heaven I could see Spartan Helen,  
In the same state, that sister to the sons  
Of Jove, for by her beauteous eyes was Troy,  
That prosperous city, with disgrace o'erthrown.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

Ye breezes, who the ships convey,  
That long becalmed at anchor lay,  
Nor dared to quit the strand;  
As the swift keel divides the wave,  
Say whither am I borne a slave,  
Ordned to tread the Doric land,  
Or Phthia, where beset with reeds,

Apidanus, the sire of limpid rills,  
 Winding a-down the channelled hills,  
 Waters the fruitful meads?

## I. 2.

Or to that isle, with dashing oar  
 Impelled, shall I my woes deplore,  
 And on the sacred earth,  
 Where first the palm and laurel rose,  
 Memorials of Latona's throes,  
 Which to the twins divine gave birth,  
 Teach the harmonious strain to flow ;  
 With Delos' nymphs Diana's praise resound,  
 Her hair with golden fillet bound,  
 And never-erring bow?

## II. 1.

Or, pent in some Athenian tower,  
 Devoted to Minerva's power,  
 On the robe's tissued ground  
 While, shadowed by my needle, spread  
 Expressive forms, in vivid thread,  
 Picture the goddess whirling round  
 Her chariot with unrivalled speed ;  
 Or represent the Titan's impious crew,  
 Whom Jove's red lightnings overthrew,  
 Those monsters doomed to bleed?

## II. 2.

Alas ! my sons, a valiant band,  
 My fathers, and my native land,  
 Ye shared the general fate.  
 Sacked by the Greeks, Troy's bulwarks smoke,  
 But I, constrained to bear the yoke,  
 Shall soon behold some foreign state,  
 To ignominious bondage led ;  
 And leaving vanquished Asia Europe's slave,  
 Debarred an honourable grave,  
 Ascend the victor's bed.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Talthy.* Where, O ye Phrygian damsels, shall I find  
 The wretched Hecuba, who erst was queen  
 Of Ilion?



*Chorus.* Prostrate near you on the ground,  
Wrapt in her mantle, there she lies.

*Talthy.* Great Jove!  
What shall I say? that thou from Heaven look'st down  
Upon mankind, or have they rashly formed  
A vain opinion, deeming that the race  
Of gods exist, though fortune governs all?  
Ha! was not this the queen of wealthy Phrygia,  
And was not she the happy Priam's wife?  
But her whole city by the hostile spear  
Is now destroyed, while she a slave, bowed down  
By age, and childless, stretched upon the ground,  
Defiles with dust her miserable head.  
Old as I am, yet gladly would I die  
Rather than sink into abhorred disgrace.  
Arise, unhappy woman, O lift up  
That feeble body, and that hoary head.

*Hecuba.* Away! O suffer this decrepit frame  
To rest. Why move me! Whosoe'er thou art,  
What mean'st thou? why dost thou molest th' afflicted?

*Talthy.* Talthybius: me, the herald of the Greeks,  
O woman, Agamemnon hath despatched  
To fetch you.

*Hecuba.* Com'st thou, by the Greeks ordained,  
My friend, to slay me also at the tomb?  
How welcome were such tidings; let us go,  
With speed conduct me thither.

*Talthy.* To inter  
Your daughter, I invite you; both the sons  
Of Atreus, and the assembled Grecian host,  
Have sent me for that purpose.

*Hecuba.* Ah! what say'st thou  
Thou com'st not to inform me I must die,  
But to unfold the most disastrous tidings.  
Then art thou lost, my daughter, from the arms  
Of thy fond mother torn; of thee, my child  
Am I bereft. But how did ye destroy her,  
Respectfully, or with the ruthless hand  
Of hostile rage? Speak, though it wound my soul.

*Talthy.* A second time, in pity to your daughter,  
You make me weep; for now while I relate  
Her sufferings, tears bedew these swimming eyes,

Such as I shed when at the tomb she perished.  
To view the sacrifice the Grecian host  
Were all assembled : taking by the hand  
Polyxena, on the sepulchral hillock  
Achilles' son then placed her : I drew near,  
Attended by the chosen youths of Greece,  
To hold the tender victim, and prevent  
Her struggles. But Achilles' son, uplifting  
With both his hands a cup of massive gold,  
Poured forth libations to his breathless sire ;  
And gave a sign to me, through the whole camp  
Strict silence to proclaim. I in the midst  
Stood up and cried : " Be mute, ye Greeks, let none  
Presume to speak, observe a general silence."  
The troops obeyed, and through their crowded ranks  
Not e'en a breath was heard, while in these words  
The chief expressed his purpose : " Son of Peleus,  
My father, the propitiatory drops  
Of these libations which invite the dead  
Accept ; O come and quaff the crimson blood  
Of this pure virgin, whom to thee all Greece  
And I devote ; be thou benign, O grant us  
Securely to weigh anchor, to unbind  
Our halsers, and on all of us bestow  
A happy voyage to our native land  
From vanquished 'Troy." He ceased, and in his  
prayer  
Joined the whole army, when the chief unsheathed  
His golden-hilted sword, and gave a sign  
To chosen youths of Greece to hold the virgin,  
Which she perceived, and in these words addressed  
The warriors : " O ye Argives, who laid waste  
My city, willingly I die, let no man  
Confine these arms, I with undaunted breast  
Will meet the stroke. I by the gods conjure you  
Release, and slay me as my rank demands  
Like one born free ; for I from mighty kings  
Descend, and in the shades beneath should blush  
To be accounted an ignoble slave."  
Through all the host ran murmurs of assent,  
And royal Agamemnon bade the youths  
Release the virgin ; they their monarch's voice,

Soon as they heard, obeyed ; our lord's behests  
 The princess too revering, from her shoulder  
 Down to her waist rent off the purple robe,  
 Displayed her bosom like some statue formed  
 In exquisite proportion, and to earth  
 Bending her knee, in these affecting words  
 Expressed herself : " If at my breast thou aim  
 The wound, strike here ; if at my neck, that neck  
 Is ready bared." Half willing, and half loth,  
 Through pity for the maid, he with keen steel  
 Severed the arteries ; streams of blood gushed forth ;  
 Yet even thus, though at her latest gasp,  
 She showed a strong solicitude to fall  
 With decency, while stood the gazing host  
 Around her : soon as through the ghastly wound  
 Her soul had issued, every Greek was busied  
 In various labours ; o'er the corse some strewed  
 The verdant foliage, others reared a pyre  
 With trunks of fir : but he who nothing brought,  
 From him who with funereal ornament  
 Was laden, heard these taunts : " O slothful wretch,  
 Bear'st thou no robe, no garland, hast thou nought  
 To give in honour of this generous maid ?"  
 Such their encomiums on thy breathless daughter.  
 You, of all women, who in such a child  
 Were happiest, now most wretched I behold.

*Chorus.* Fate, the behests of the immortal gods  
 Accomplishing, with tenfold weight hath caused  
 This dreadful curse to fall on Priam's house,  
 And on our city.

*Hecuba.* 'Midst unnumbered ills  
 I know not, O my daughter, whither first  
 To turn my eyes, for if on one I touch,  
 Another hinders me, and I again,  
 By a long train of woes succeeding woes,  
 To some fresh object am from thence called off ;  
 Nor can I from my tortured soul efface  
 The grief thy fate occasions ; yet the tale  
 Of thy exalted courage checks my groans,  
 Which else had been immoderate. No just cause  
 Have we for wonder, if the barren land  
 Cheered by Heaven's influence, with benignant suns

Yields plenteous harvests, while a richer soil  
Deprived of every necessary aid  
Bears weeds alone. But 'midst the human race  
The wicked man is uniformly wicked,  
The good still virtuous, nor doth evil fortune  
Corrupt his soul ; the same unsullied worth  
He still retains. Is this great difference owing  
To birth, or education ? We are taught  
What virtue is, by being nurtured well,  
And he who thoroughly hath learnt this lesson,  
Guided by the unerring rule of right,  
Can thence discern what's base.—My soul in vain  
Hath hazarded these incoherent thoughts.  
But, O Talthybius, to the Greeks repair,  
And strict injunctions give, that no man touch  
My daughter's corse, but let the gazing crowd  
Be driven away. For in a numerous host  
Its multitudes break loose from all restraints,  
The outrages of mariners exceed  
Devouring flame, and whosoe'er abstains  
From mischief, by his comrades is despised.  
But, O my aged servant, take and dip  
That urn in ocean's waves, and hither bring,  
Filled with its water, that the last sad rites  
To my departed daughter I may pay,  
And lave the corse of that unwedded bride,  
Of that affianced virgin : but alas !  
Whence with such costly gifts as she deserves,  
Her tomb can I adorn ? My present state  
Affords them not, but what it doth afford  
Will I bestow, and from the captive dames  
Appointed to attend me, who reside  
Within these tents, some ornaments collect,  
If, unobserved by their new masters, aught  
They have secreted. O ye splendid domes,  
Ye palaces once happy, which contained  
All that was rich and fair ; O Priam thou  
The sire, and I who was the aged mother  
Of an illustrious race, how are we dwindled  
To nothing, stripped of all our ancient pride !  
Yet do we glory, some in mansions stored  
With gold abundant, others when distinguished

## Euripides

Among the citizens by sounding titles.  
 Vain are the schemes which with incessant care  
 We frame, and all our boastful words are vain.  
 The happiest man is he who, by no ill  
 O'ertaken, passes through life's fleeting day.  
 [Exit HECUBA.]

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I.

By Heaven was my devoted head  
 Menaced with impending ill,  
 What time the pines, whose branches spread  
 Their tutelary shade o'er Ida's hill,  
 Were laid by Phrygian Paris low,  
 That his adventurous bark might stem the tide,  
 From Sparta's coast to waft the fairest bride  
 On whom the solar beams their golden radiance throw.

## II.

Surrounding labours were at hand  
 Leagued with the behests of fate;  
 Then did such madness seize the land,  
 As called down vengeance from a foreign state,  
 The royal swain with dazzled eyes  
 Gave that decree, the source of all our woes,  
 When from three rival goddesses he chose  
 Bright Venus, and pronounced that she deserved the  
 prize.

## III.

The spear and death hence raged around,  
 Hence were my mansions levelled with the ground  
 Staining with tears Eurotas' tide,  
 Too deeply grieved to share the victor's pride,  
 The Spartan virgin too in vain  
 Bewails her favoured youth untimely slain,  
 While, sprinkling ashes o'er their vest  
 And hoary head, the matrons bend  
 O'er their sons' urns; their groans to Heaven ascend  
 They tear their cheeks, and beat their miserable breast

## ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

*Attend.* Where is the wretched Hecuba, my friends,  
Who in her woes surpasses all, or male,  
Or of the female race? her none can rob  
Of her just claim, pre-eminence in grief.

*Chorus.* With the harsh sounds of that ill-boding tongue,  
O wretch, what mean'st thou? wilt thou never cease  
To be th' unwelcome herald of affliction?

*Attend.* Most grievous are the tidings which I bring  
To Hecuba, nor easy were the task  
In words auspicious to make known to mortals  
Such dire calamities.

*Chorus.* From her apartment  
She seasonably comes forth to give thee audience.

## HECUBA, ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

*Attend.* O most unfortunate, whose woes exceed  
All that the power of language can express,  
My queen, you perish, doomed no more to view  
The blessed light; of children, husband, city,  
Bereft and ruined.

*Hecuba.* Nothing hast thou told  
But what I knew, thou only com'st t' insult me:  
Yet wherefore dost thou bring to me this corse  
Of my Polyxena, o'er whom 'twas said  
The Grecian host with pious zeal all vied  
To heap a tomb?

*Attend.* She knows not, but laments  
For the deceased Polyxena alone,  
And to her recent woes is yet a stranger.

*Hecuba.* Ah, bring'st thou the inspired prophetic head,  
And the dishevelled tresses of Cassandra?

*Attend.* You speak of one yet living, but bewail not  
This the deceased: survey the naked corse  
Of him whose death to you will seem most strange  
And most unlooked for.

*Hecuba.* Ha, I see my son,  
My dearest Polydore, whom he of Thrace  
Beneath his roof protected. I am ruined;  
Now utterly I perish. O my son,  
For thee, for thee I wake the frantic dirge,  
By that malignant demon which assumed

Thy voice, thy semblance, recently apprized  
Of this calamity.

*Attend.* O wretched mother,  
Know you then what was your son's fate?

*Hecuba.* A sight  
Incredible and new to me is that  
Which I behold: for from my former woes  
Spring woes in long succession, and the day  
When I shall cease to weep, shall cease to groan,  
Will never come.

*Chorus.* The woes which we endure  
Alas! are dreadful.

*Hecuba.* O my son, thou son  
Of an ill-fated mother, by what death  
Didst thou expire? through what disastrous cause  
Here liest thou prostrate? ah, what bloody hand—

*Attend.* I know not: on the shore his corse I found.

*Hecuba.* Cast up by the impetuous waves, or pierced  
With murderous spear?

*Attend.* The surges of the deep  
Had thrown it on the sand.

*Hecuba.* Alas! too well  
I comprehend the meaning of the dream  
Which to these eyes appeared: the spectre borne  
On sable pinions no illusion proved,  
When, O my son, thee, thee it represented  
No longer dwelling in the realms of light.

*Chorus.* Instructed by that vision, canst thou name  
The murderer?

*Hecuba.* 'Twas my friend, the Thracian king,  
With whom in secrecy his aged sire  
Had placed him.

*Chorus.* Ha! what mean'st thou? to possess  
That gold by slaying him?

*Hecuba.* O, 'twas a deed  
Unutterable, a deed without a name,  
Surpassing all astonishment, unholy,  
And not to be endured. Where now the laws  
Of hospitality? Accursed man,  
How cruelly hast thou with reeking sword  
Transpierced this unresisting boy, nor heard  
The gentle voice of pity!

*Chorus.*

Hapless queen,  
How hath some demon, thy malignant foe,  
Rendered thee of all mortals the most wretched :  
But I behold great Agamemnon come,  
And therefore, O my friends, let us be silent

AGAMEMNON, HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Agam.*

Whence this delay? why go you not t' inter,  
O Hecuba, your daughter, whom Talthybius  
Directed that no Greek might be allowed  
To touch? We therefore have with your request  
Complied, nor moved the corse. But you remain  
Inactive, which I wonder at, and come  
To fetch you, for each previous solemn rite  
That best might please, if aught such rites can  
    please,  
Have we performed. But ah, what Trojan youth  
Do I behold lie breathless in the tent?  
For that he was no Greek, the garb informs me  
In which he's clad.

*Hecuba.*

Thou wretch, for of myself  
I speak, when thee, O Hecuba, I name ;  
What shall I do, at Agamemnon's knees  
Fall prostrate, or in silence bear my woes?

*Agam.*

Why weep, with face averted, yet refuse  
T' inform me what hath happened? who is he?

*Hecuba.*

But from his knees, if, deeming me a slave  
And enemy, the monarch should repel me,  
This would but make my sorrows yet more poignant.

*Agam.*

I am no seer, nor can I uninformed  
Trace out the secret purpose of your soul.

*Hecuba.*

Am I mistaken then, while I suppose  
A foe in him who doth not mean me ill?

*Agam.*

If 'tis your wish I should not be apprized,  
We both are of one mind ; you will not speak,  
And I as little am disposed to hear.

*Hecuba.*

Without his aid no vengeance for my child  
Can I obtain : yet why deliberate thus?  
Prosper or fail I must take courage now.  
O royal Agamemnon, by those knees  
A suppliant I conjure you, by that beard,  
And that right hand, victorious o'er your foes.



*Agam.* What do you wish for? To obtain your freedom?

This were not difficult.

*Hecuba.* No, give me vengeance  
On yonder guilty wretch, and I am willing  
To linger out the remnant of my life  
In servitude.

*Agam.* Then why implore our aid?

*Hecuba.* For reasons you suspect not. Do you see  
That breathless corse o'er which my tears I shed?

*Agam.* The corse I see; but cannot comprehend  
What follows next.

*Hecuba.* Him erst I bore and nurtured.

*Agam.* Is the deceased, O miserable dame,  
One of your children?

*Hecuba.* Not of those who fell  
Beneath Troy's walls.

*Agam.* What! had you other sons?

*Hecuba.* Yes, him you see, born in an evil hour.

*Agam.* But where was he when Ilion was destroyed?

*Hecuba.* His father, apprehensive of his death,  
Conveyed him thence.

*Agam.* From all the other children

Which then he had, where placed he this apart?

*Hecuba.* In this same region where his corse was found

*Agam.* With Polymestor, sovereign of the land?

*Hecuba.* He, to preserve that execrable gold,  
Was hither sent.

*Agam.* But, by what ruthless hand,

And how, was he despatched?

*Hecuba.* By whom beside?

The murderer was his friend, the Thracian king.

*Agam.* Was he thus eager? O abandoned wretch,  
To seize the gold!

*Hecuba.* E'en thus; soon as he knew  
Troy was o'erthrown.

*Agam.* But where did you discover

The body, or who brought it?

*Hecuba.* On the shore

This servant found it.

*Agam.* Or in quest of him

Or other task then busied?

*Hecuba.* To fetch water

To lave Polyxena's remains she went.

*Agam.* When he had slain him, it appears, his friend  
Did cast him forth.

*Hecuba.* He to the waves consigned  
The stripling's mangled corse.

*Agam.* O wretched woman,  
Surrounded by immeasurable woes.

*Hecuba.* I am undone ; no farther ill remains  
For me t' experience.

*Agam.* Ah ! what woman e'er  
Was born to such calamities ?

*Hecuba.* Not one  
Exists, whose sorrows equal mine, unless  
You of Calamity herself would speak.  
Yet hear the motive why I clasp your knees.  
If I appear to merit what I suffer,  
I must be patient ; but if not, avenge  
My wrongs upon the man who 'gainst his guest  
Such treachery could commit, who, nor the gods  
Of Erebus beneath, nor those who rule  
In Heaven above regarding, this vile deed,  
Did perpetrate, e'en he with whom I oft  
Partook the feast, on whom I showered each bounty,  
Esteeming him the first of all my friends ;  
Yet, when at Ilium's palace with respect  
He had been treated, a deliberate scheme  
Of murder forming, he destroyed my son,  
On whom he deigned not to bestow a tomb,  
But threw his corse into the briny deep.  
Though I indeed am feeble, and a slave,  
Yet mighty are the gods, and by their law  
The world is ruled : for by that law we learn  
That there are gods, and can mark out the bounds  
Of justice and injustice ; if such law  
To you transmitted, be infringed, if they  
Who kill their guests, or dare with impious hand  
To violate the altars of the gods,  
Unpunished 'scape, no equity is left  
Among mankind. Deeming such base connivance  
Unworthy of yourself, reverse my woes,  
Have pity on me, like a painter take

Your stand to view me, and observe the number  
Of my afflictions ; once was I a queen,  
But now am I a slave ; in many a son  
I once was rich, but now am I both old  
And of my children left, without a city,  
Forlorn, and of all mortals the most wretched.  
But whither would you go ? With you I seem  
To have no interest. Miserable me !  
Why do we mortals by assiduous toil,  
And such a painful search as their importance  
Makes requisite, all other arts attain,  
Yet not enough intent on the due knowledge  
Of that sole empress of the human soul  
Persuasion, no rewards bestow on those  
Who teach us by insinuating words  
How to procure our wishes ? who can trust  
Hereafter in prosperity ? That band  
Of my heroic sons is now no more,  
Myself a captive, am led forth to tasks  
Unseemly, and e'en now these eyes behold  
The air obscured by Ilion's rising smoke.  
It might be vain perhaps, were I to found  
A claim to your assistance on your love :  
Yet must I speak : my daughter, who in Troy  
Was called Cassandra, the prophetic dame,  
Partakes your bed ; and how those rapturous nights  
Will you acknowledge, or to her how show  
Your gratitude for all the fond embraces  
Which she bestows, O king, or in her stead  
To me her mother ? In the soul of man  
Th' endearments of the night, by darkness veiled,  
Create the strongest interest. To my tale  
Now listen : do you see that breathless corse ?  
Each act of kindness which to him is shown,  
Upon a kinsman of the dame you love  
Will be conferred. But, in one point my speech  
Is yet deficient. By the wondrous arts  
Of Dædalus, or some benignant god,  
Could I give voice to each arm, hand, and hair,  
And each extremest joint, they round your knees  
Should cling together, and together weep,  
At once combining with a thousand tongues.

O monarch, O thou light of Greece, comply,  
And stretch forth that avenging arm to aid  
An aged woman, though she be a thing  
Of nought, O succour : for the good man's duty  
Is to obey the dread behests of justice,  
And ever punish those who act amiss.

*Chorus.* 'Tis wonderful, indeed, how all events  
Happen to mortals, and the dread behests  
Of fate, uncircumscribed by human laws,  
Constrain us to form amities with those  
To whom the most inveterate hate we bore,  
And into foes convert our former friends.

*Agam.* To you, O Hecuba, your son, your fortunes,  
And your entreaties, is my pity due.  
I in obedience to the gods and justice  
Wish to avenge you on this impious friend,  
Could I appear your interests to espouse,  
Without the troops suspecting that I slay  
The Thracian monarch for Cassandra's sake :  
My terrors hence arise ; the host esteem  
Him our ally, and the deceased a foe :  
What though you held him dear, his fate, the loss  
Of you alone, affects not the whole camp.  
Reflect too, that you find me well disposed  
To share your toils, and in your cause exert  
My utmost vigour ; but, what makes me slow,  
Is a well-grounded fear of blame from Greece.

*Hecuba.* Alas ! there's no man free : for some are slaves  
To gold, to fortune others, and the rest,  
The multitude or written laws restrain  
From acting as their better judgment dictates.  
But since you are alarmed, and to the rabble  
Yield an implicit deference, from that fear  
I will release you ; only to my schemes  
Be privy, if some mischief I contrive  
Against the murderer of my son : but take  
No active part. If, when the Thracian suffers,  
As he shall suffer, 'mongst the Greeks a tumult  
Break forth, or they attempt to succour him,  
Restrain them, without seeming to befriend  
My interests. As for what remains, rely  
On me, and I will manage all things well.

*Agam.* How then? what mean you? With that aged hand

To wield a sword, and take away the life  
Of that barbarian, or by drugs endued  
With magic power? the help you need, what arts  
Can furnish? what strong arm have you to fight  
Your battles? whence will you procure allies?

*Hecuba.* These tents conceal a group of Trojan dames.

*Agam.* Mean you those captives whom the Greeks have seized.

*Hecuba.* With them I on the murderer will inflict  
Due punishment.

*Agam.* How can the female sex  
O'er men obtain a conquest?

*Hecuba.* Numbers strike  
A foe with terror, and the wiles of women  
Are hard to be withstood.

*Agam.* They may strike terror,  
But in their courage I no trust can place.

*Hecuba.* What? did not women slay Ægyptus' sons,  
And in their rage exterminate each male  
From Lemnos? But leave me to find out means  
How to effect my purpose. Through the camp  
In safety this my faithful servant send;  
And thou, when to my Thracian friend thou com'st,  
Say, "Hecuba, erst Queen of Troy, invites  
Thee and thy children, on thy own account,  
No less than hers, because she to thy sons  
And thee the self-same message must deliver."  
The newly slain Polyxena's interment  
Defer, O Agamemnon; in one flame  
That when their kindred corpses are consumed;  
The brother with the sister, who demand  
A twofold portion of their mother's grief  
Together may be buried in one grave.

*Agam.* These rites shall be performed, which could the  
troops

Set sail, I needs must have denied: but now,  
Since Neptune sends not an auspicious breeze,  
Expecting a more seasonable voyage,  
Here must we wait. But may success attend you;  
For 'tis the common interest of mankind,

Of every individual, every state,  
That he who hath transgressed should suffer ill,  
And fortune crown the efforts of the virtuous.  
[*Exit* AGAMEMNON.]

## CHORUS.

## I. I.

No more, O Troy, thy dreaded name  
Conspicuous in the lists of fame,  
Midst fortresses impregnable shall stand,  
In such thick clouds an armed host  
Pours terrors from the Grecian coast,  
And wastes thy vanquished land :  
Shorn from thy rampired brow the crown  
Of turrets fell ; thy palaces o'erspread  
With smoke lie waste, no more I tread  
Thy wonted streets, my native town.

## I. 2.

I perished at the midnight hour,  
When, aided by the banquet's power,  
Sleep o'er my eyes his earliest influence shed ;  
Retiring from the choral song,  
The sacrifice and festive throng,  
Stretched on the downy bed  
The bridegroom indolently lay,  
His massive spear suspended on the beam,  
No more he saw the helmets gleam,  
Or nautic troops in dread array.

## II. I.

While me the golden mirror's aid,  
My flowing tresses taught to braid  
In graceful ringlets with a fillet bound,  
Just as I cast my robe aside,  
And sought the couch ; extending wide  
Through every street this sound  
Was heard ; " O when, ye sons of Greece,  
This nest of robbers levelled with the plain,  
Will ye behold your homes again ?  
When shall these tedious labours cease ? "

## Euripides

## II. 2.

Then from my couch up starting, drest  
 Like Spartan nymph in zoneless vest,  
 At Dian's shrine an ineffectual prayer  
 Did I address ; for hither led,  
 First having viewed my husband dead,  
 Full oft I in despair,  
 As the proud vessel sailed from land,  
 Looked back, and saw my native walls laid low,  
 Then fainting with excess of woe  
 At length lost sight of Ilion's strand.

## III.

Helen that sister to the sons of Jove,  
 And Paris Ida's swain,  
 With my curses still pursuing,  
 For to them I owe my ruin,  
 Me they from my country drove,  
 Never to return again,  
 By that detested spousal rite  
 On which Hymen never smiled,  
 No, 'twas some demon who with lewd delight  
 Their frantic souls beguiled :  
 Her may ocean's waves no more  
 Waft to her paternal shore.

## POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Polym.* For thee, O Priam, my unhappy friend,  
 And you, my dearest Hecuba, I weep,  
 Beholding your distress, your city taken,  
 Your daughter newly slain : alas ! there's nought  
 To be relied on ; fame is insecure,  
 Nor can the prosperous their enjoyments guard  
 Against a change of Fortune, for the gods  
 Backward and forward turn her wavering wheel,  
 And introduce confusion in the world,  
 That we, because we know not will happen,  
 May worship them. But of what use are plants  
 Which have no virtue to remove our woes ?  
 If you my absence censure, be appeased,  
 For in the midst of Thracia's wide domains

I from these coasts was distant at the time  
Of your arrival : soon as I returned,  
When from the palace I was issuing forth,  
This your attendant met me, and delivered  
The message, hearing which, I hither came.

*Hecuba.* O Polymestor, wretched as I am,  
I blush to see thy face ; because thou erst  
In happier days didst know me, I with shame  
Appear before thee in my present fortunes.  
Nor can I look at thee with steadfast eyes :  
But this thou wilt not deem to be a mark  
Of enmity : the cause of such behaviour  
Is only custom, which forbids our sex  
To gaze on men.

*Polym.* No wonder you thus act  
Under such circumstances. But what need  
Have you of me, and wherefore did you send  
To fetch me from the palace ?

*Hecuba.* I in private  
A secret of importance would disclose  
To thee and to thy children. From these tents  
Give orders for thy followers to depart.

*Polym.* [*to his attendants who retire*].  
Withdraw ; this solitary spot is safe.  
For you and the confederate Grecian host  
Are all attached to me. But 'tis incumbent  
On you t' inform me what my prosperous fortunes  
Can yield to succour my unhappy friends !  
For this is what I wish to do.

*Hecuba.* Say first,  
If he, my son, whom this maternal hand  
And his fond father in thy mansions placed,  
My Polydore, yet live. I'll then pursue  
My questions.

*Polym.* Yes, in him you still are blest.

*Hecuba.* How kind, how worthy of thyself that speech,  
My dearest friend !

*Polym.* What farther would you know ?

*Hecuba.* If haply yet the youth remember aught  
Of me his mother.

*Polym.* Much he wished to come  
And visit you in private.



- Hecuba.* Is the gold  
He brought from Troy preserved?  
*Polym.* I keep it safe  
In my own palace.
- Hecuba.* Keep it if thou wilt;  
But covet nor the treasures of thy friends.
- Polym.* I do not covet them; my utmost wish  
Is to enjoy, O woman, what I have.
- Hecuba.* Know'st thou then, what to thee and to thy  
sons  
I want to say?  
*Polym.* I know not; till in words  
Your thoughts are signified.
- Hecuba.* Bestow such love  
On Polydore as thou receiv'st from me.
- Polym.* What is it that to me and to my children  
You would disclose?
- Hecuba.* The spot, where deep in earth  
The ancient treasures of all Priam's house  
Lie buried.
- Polym.* Is this secret what you wish  
Should to your son be mentioned?
- Hecuba.* Yes, by thee,  
Because thou art a virtuous man!
- Polym.* But wherefore  
Did you require these children should be present?
- Hecuba.* For them to know the secret, if thou die,  
Will be of great advantage.
- Polym.* You have spoken  
Well and discreetly.
- Hecuba.* Know'st thou where at Troy  
Minerva's temple stands?
- Polym.* Is the gold there?  
But by what mark shall I the spot distinguish?
- Hecuba.* Above the surface rises a black stone.
- Polym.* Will you describe the place yet more minutely?
- Hecuba.* The gold I in thy custody would place,  
Which I from Ilion hither bring.
- Polym.* Where is it?  
Concealed beneath your garment?
- Hecuba.* 'Midst a heap  
Of spoils laid up within yon tents.

Where mean you?

These are the Grecian mariners' abode.

*a.* In separate dwellings have they placed the captives?

But how can we rely upon the faith

Of those within? doth no man thither come?

*a.* There's not a Greek within; we are alone:

But enter thou these doors: for now the host,

Impatient to weigh anchor, would return

From Ilion to their homes. Thou with thy children

T' accomplish all the dread behests of fate,

Shalt thither go where thou hast lodged my son.

[*Exeunt* HECUBA and POLYESTOR.

*orus.* Thou hast not yet received the blow,

But justice sure will lay thee low.

Like him who headlong from on high

Falls when no friendly haven's nigh,

Into the ocean's stormy wave,

Here shalt thou find a certain grave:

For twofold ruin doth impend

O'er him who human laws pursue,

And righteous gods indignant view:

Thee shall the hope of gain mislead,

Which prompts thee to advance with speed,

And Pluto's loathed abode descend:

Soon shalt thou press th' ensanguined strand,

Slain by a woman's feeble hand.

*i.* [*within*]. Ah me, the light that visited these eyes  
Is darkened.

Heard ye, O my friends, the shriek

Of yonder Thracian?

*ii.* [*within*]. Yet again, alas,

My children's foul and execrable murder!

My friends, some recent mischief hath within

Been perpetrated.

*iii.* [*within*]. Though your feet are swift,

Ye shalt not 'scape, for through the walls I'll burst

My passage.

With a forceful hand, behold

He brandishes the javelin. Shall we rush

To seize him? This important crisis bids us

Assist our queen and Phrygia's valiant dames.

*ba.* Now do thy worst, and from their hinges rend

Yon massive gates ; no more canst thou impart  
To those lost eyes their visual orbs, nor see  
Thy sons, whom I have slain, to life restored.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Chorus.* Hast thou, my honoured mistress, caught the  
Thracian,  
Over this treacherous friend hast thou prevailed,  
And all thy threats accomplished ?

*Hecuba.* Ye shall see him  
Before the tent, without delay, deprived  
Of sight, advancing with unsteady foot,  
And the two breathless corpses of his sons,  
Whom I, assisted by the noblest matrons  
Of Troy, have slain. Th' atonement he hath paid  
To my revenge, is just. But now behold  
He issues forth : I will retire and shun  
The Thracian chief's unconquerable rage.

POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Polym.* Ah, whither am I going ? wretched me !  
Where am I ? what supports me ? With these hand  
Groping my way like some four-footed beast,  
How shall I turn me, to the right or left,  
That I those murderous Phrygian dames may seize  
Who have destroyed me ? Impious and accurst  
Daughters of Ilion, in what dark recess  
Do they escape me ? Would to heaven, O Sun,  
Thou to these bleeding eyeballs could'st afford  
A cure, that thou my blindness could'st remove.  
But hush, I hear those women's cautious tread.  
How shall I leap upon them ? with their flesh  
How shall I glut my rage, and for a feast  
To hungry tigers cast their mangled bones,  
In just requital of the horrid wrongs,  
Which I from them, ah wretched me, have suffered  
But whither, by what impulse am I borne,  
Leaving the corpses of my sons exposed  
To hellish Bacchanalians, as they lie  
Torn by the dogs, and on the mountain's ridge  
Cast forth unburied ! Where shall I stand still ?  
Or whither shall I go ? Like some proud bark

Towed into harbour, which contracts its sails ;  
 I to that fatal chamber which contains  
 The corsers of my murdered sons rush onward  
 With speed involuntary.

*Chorus.* Hapless man,  
 How art thou visited by woes too grievous  
 To be endured ! but by dread Jove thy foe,  
 On him whose deeds are base, it is ordained  
 That the severest punishments await.

*Polym.* Rouse, O ye Thracians, armed with ponderous  
 spears,  
 Arrayed in mail, for generous steeds renowned,  
 A hardy race, whom Mars himself inspires.  
 To you, O Grecian troops, and both the sons  
 Of Atreus, I with clamorous voice appeal :  
 Come hither, I implore you by the gods.  
 Do any of you hear me ? Is there none  
 Who will assist ? Why loiter ye ? Those women,  
 Those captives have destroyed me. Horrid wrongs  
 Have I endured ; ah me, the foul reproach !  
 But whither shall I turn, or whither go ?  
 Through the ærial regions shall I wing  
 My swift career to that sublime abode  
 Where Sirius or Orion from his eyes  
 Darts radiant flames ? or, to perdition doomed,  
 Shall I descend to Pluto's sable flood ?

*Chorus.* He merits pardon, whosoe'er assailed  
 By ills too grievous to be borne, shakes off  
 The loathed encumbrance of a wretched life.

AGAMEMNON, POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Agam.* Hearing thy shrieks I came. For Echo, child  
 Of craggy mountains, in no gentle note  
 Wafted those sounds tumultuous through the host,  
 Had we not known that by the Grecian spear  
 The towers of vanquished Phrygia are o'erthrown,  
 Such uproar would have caused no small alarm.

*Polym.* My dearest friend, soon as I heard your voice,  
 I instantly perceived 'twas Agamemnon.  
 See you my sufferings ?

*Agam.* Wretched Polymestor !  
 Who hath destroyed thee ? who bereaved of sight

Thy bleeding orbs, and those thy children slew?  
 Whoe'er the author of such deeds, his rage  
 Was dreadful sure 'gainst thee and 'gainst thy sons.

*Polym.* With the assistance of those captive dames,  
 Me Hecuba hath murdered, more than murdered.

*Agam.* What mean'st thou? Are you guilty of the crime  
 With which he charges you? and have you dared  
 To perpetrate an action thus audacious?

*Polym.* Ah me! what said you? Is she near at hand?  
 Inform me where to find, that I may seize her,  
 And scatter wide to all the fowls of heaven  
 Her mangled corse.

*Agam.* Ha! what is thy design?

*Polym.* Allow me, I conjure you by the gods,  
 To grasp her with this frantic arm.

*Agam.* Desist,  
 And casting forth all rancour from thy heart,  
 Now plead thy cause; that, hearing both apart,  
 I with unbiassed justice may decide,  
 If thou these sufferings merit'st.

*Polym.* I will speak.  
 There was one Polydore, the youngest son  
 Of those whom Hecuba to Priam bore;  
 Him erst removing from the Phrygian realm,  
 His sire to me consigned, that in my palace  
 He might be nurtured, when that hoary king  
 The fall of Troy suspected: him I slew:  
 But hear my motives for the deed, to prove  
 How justly and how prudently I acted.  
 Your enemy, that boy, if he survived  
 The ruin of his country, might, I feared,  
 Collect the scattered citizens of Troy,  
 And there again reside. I also feared,  
 That when the Greeks knew one of Priam's line  
 Was living, with a second fleet invading  
 The shores of Phrygia, they again might drain  
 Of their inhabitants their Thracian fields,  
 Involving us, their neighbours, in the vengeance  
 They on their foes at Ilion wreak. To us  
 Already hath such neighbourhood, O king,  
 Proved baneful. But, apprized of her son's fate,  
 Hecuba drew me hither, on pretence

She would inform me where in massive gold  
The hidden treasures of old Priam's race  
Beneath Troy's ruins were secured. Alone,  
She with my children brought me to this tent,  
That none beside might know. With bended knee,  
While on a couch I sat, some on my left,  
And others on my right, as with a friend,  
Full many of the Trojan damsels took  
Their places, holding up against the sun  
My robe, the woof of an Edonian loom :  
Some feigned t' admire it, others viewed my spear,  
And stripped me of them both. From hand to hand  
The matrons, seeming to caress my children,  
Removed them far from their unhappy sire :  
And after their fond speeches, in an instant,  
(Could you believe it ?) snatching up the swords,  
Which they beneath their garments had concealed,  
They stabbed my sons, whom while I strove to aid,  
In hostile guise their comrades held my arms  
And feet : if I looked up, they by the hair  
Confined me ; if I moved my hands, my struggles  
Proved ineffectual, through the numerous band  
Of women who assailed me, and to close  
The scene of my calamity, accomplished  
A deed with more than common horror fraught,  
For they tore out my bleeding eyes, and fled.  
But, like a tiger starting up, I chased  
These ruthless fiends, and with a hunter's speed  
Each wall examined, dashing to the ground,  
And breaking what I seized. These cruel wrongs,  
While I your interests study to maintain,  
O Agamemnon, and despatch your foe,  
Have I endured. To spare a long harangue,  
The whole of what 'gainst woman hath been said  
By those of ancient times, is saying now,  
Or shall be said hereafter, in few words  
Will I comprise ; nor ocean's waves, nor earth,  
Nurture so vile a race, as he who most  
Hath with the sex conversed, but knows too well.

**Chorus.** Curb that audacious virulence of speech,  
Nor, by thy woes embittered, thus revile  
All womankind ; the number of our sex

Is great, and some there are, whom as a mark  
 To envy, their distinguished worth holds forth,  
 Though some are justly numbered with the wicked.

*Hecuba.* O Agamemnon, never ought the tongue  
 To have a greater influence o'er mankind  
 Than actions; but whoever hath done well,  
 Ought to speak well; and he, whose deeds are base,  
 To use unseemly language, nor find means  
 By specious words to colour o'er injustice.  
 Full wise indeed are they to whom such art  
 Is most familiar: but to stand the test  
 Of time not wise enough; for they all perish,  
 Not one of them e'er 'scapes. These previous thoughts  
 To you, O mighty king, have I addressed.  
 But now to him I turn, and will refute  
 The fallacies he uttered. What pretence  
 Hast thou for saying, that to free the Greeks  
 From such a second war, and for the sake  
 Of Agamemnon, thou didst slay my son?  
 For first, O villain, the barbarian race  
 With Greece, nor will, nor ever can be friends.  
 What interest roused thy zeal? Didst thou expect  
 To form a nuptial union? Wert thou moved  
 By kindred ties, or any secret cause?  
 Greece with a fleet forsooth would have returned  
 To lay thy country waste. Who, canst thou think,  
 Will credit such assertions? If the truth  
 Thou wilt confess, gold and thy thirst of gain  
 Were my son's murderers. Why, when Troy yet  
     flourished,  
 Why, when the city was on every side  
 Fenced by strong bulwarks, why, when Priam lived,  
 And Hector wielded a victorious spear,  
 Didst thou not, if thou hadst designed to act  
 In Agamemnon's favour, at the time  
 When thou didst nurture my unhappy son,  
 And in thy palace shelter, either slay,  
 Or to the Greeks surrender up the youth  
 A living prisoner? But when Ilion's light  
 Was utterly extinguished, when the smoke  
 Declared the city subject to our foes,  
 The stranger thou didst murder, at thy hearth

Who sought protection. To confirm thy guilt,  
Now hear this farther charge : if thou to Greece  
Hadst been a friend indeed, thou should'st have given  
The gold thou say'st thou keep'st, not for thine own,  
But Agamemnon's sake, among the troops  
Who suffer want, and from their native land  
Have for a tedious season been detained.  
But thou from those rapacious hands e'en now  
Canst not endure to part with it, but hoard'st it  
Still buried in thy coffers : as became thee,  
Hadst thou trained up my son, hadst thou to him  
Been a protector, great is the renown  
Thou would'st have gained ; for in distress the good  
Are steadfast ; but our prosperous fortunes swarm  
With friends unbidden. Hadst thou been in want,  
And Polydore abounded, a sure treasure  
To thee would he have proved : but now no longer  
In him hast thou a friend ; thou of thy gold  
Hast lost th' enjoyment, thou thy sons hast lost,  
And art thyself thus wretched. But to you,  
O Agamemnon, now again I speak :  
If you assist him, you will seem corrupt ;  
For you will benefit a man devoid  
Of honour, justice, piety, or truth ;  
It might be said that you delight in evil ;  
But, I presume not to reproach my lords.

*Chorus.* How doth a virtuous cause inspire the tongue  
With virtuous language !

*Agam.*

On a stranger's woes  
Reluctant I pronounce, but am constrained ;  
For shame attends the man who takes in hand  
Some great affair, and leaves it undecided.  
Know then, to me thou seem'st not to have slain  
Thy guest through an attachment to my cause,  
Nor yet to that of Greece, but that his gold  
Thou might'st retain : though in this wretched state  
Thou speak to serve thy interests. Among you  
Perhaps the murder of your guests seems light ;  
We Greeks esteem it base. If I acquit thee  
How shall I 'scape reproach ? Indeed I cannot :  
Since thou hast dared to perpetrate the crime,  
Endure the consequence.



- Polym.* Too plain it seems,  
Ah me! that, vanquished by a female slave,  
Here shall I perish by ignoble hands.
- Hecuba.* Is not this just for the atrocious deed  
Which thou hast wrought?  
*Polym.* My children, wretched me!  
And these quenched orbs.
- Hecuba.* Grief'st thou, yet think'st thou not  
That I lament my son?  
*Polym.* Malignant woman,  
Do you rejoice in taunting my distress?
- Hecuba.* In such revenge have not I cause for joy?
- Polym.* Yet not so hastily, when ocean's wave——
- Hecuba.* Shall in a bark convey me to the shores  
Of Greece?  
*Polym.* Shall whelm you in its vast abyss  
Fall'n from the shrouds.
- Hecuba.* Raised thither by what impulse?
- Polym.* Up the tall mast you with swift foot shall climb.
- Hecuba.* On feathered pinions borne, or how?  
*Polym.* With form  
Canine endued, and eyeballs glaring fire.
- Hecuba.* Whencedidst thou learn that I such wondrous change  
Shall undergo?  
*Polym.* Bacchus, the Thracian seer,  
Gave this response.
- Hecuba.* To thee did he unfold  
Nought of the grievous sufferings thou endur'st?
- Polym.* Then could you ne'er have caught me by your wile?
- Hecuba.* But on this change of being, after death,  
Or while I yet am living, shall I enter?
- Polym.* After your death, and men shall call you  
tomb——
- Hecuba.* By my new form, or what is it thou mean'st?
- Polym.* The sepulchre of that vile brute, an object  
Conspicuous to the mariner.
- Hecuba.* I care not;  
My vengeance is complete.
- Polym.* Cassandra too,  
Your daughter, must inevitably bleed.
- Hecuba.* Abomination! On thy guilty head  
These curses I retort

- Polym.* Her shall the wife  
Of Agamemnon slay, who sternly guards  
His royal mansion.
- Hecuba.* Such a frantic deed  
As this may 'Tyndarus' daughter ne'er commit!
- Polym.* She next uplifting the remorseless axe  
Shall smite her lord.
- Agam.* Ha! madman, dost thou court  
Thy ruin?
- Polym.* Slay me; for the murderous bath  
Awaits you, when to Argos you return.
- Agam.* Will ye not drag him from my sight by force?
- Polym.* Hear you with grief what I announce?
- Agam.* My followers,  
Why stop ye not the miscreant's boding mouth?
- Polym.* This mouth be closed for ever: I have spoken.
- Agam.* Will ye not cast him with the utmost speed  
Upon some desert island, since he dares  
To speak with such licentiousness? Depart,  
O wretched Hecuba, and both those corpses  
Deposit in the grave. But, as for you,  
Ye to your lord's pavilions must repair,  
O Phrygian dames: for I perceive the gales  
Rising to waft us homeward; may success  
Attend the voyage to our native land!  
And in our mansions may we find all well,  
Freed from these dangers!
- Chorus.* To the haven go,  
And to the tents, my friends, t' endure the toils  
Our lords impose; for thus harsh fate enjoins.

# THE TROJAN DAMES

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

NEPTUNE.  
MINERVA.  
HECUBA.  
CASSANDRA.

ANDROMACHE.  
HELENA.  
MENE LAUS.  
TALTHYBIUS.

CHORUS OF TROJAN DAMES.

### NEPTUNE.

FROM the vast depths of the *Ægean* sea,  
Where many a maze with graceful-moving feet  
Unwinds the choir of Nereids, Neptune comes.  
For from the time when Phœbus and myself  
Raised on this land the rampired towers of Troy  
With exact skill, my mind hath never lost  
Its fondness for this city of the Phrygians,  
Which now in ruins by the arms of Greece  
Smokes on the ground : for by Minerva's art  
Epœus of Parnassian Phocis framed  
A horse, whose hollow womb was full of arms,  
And sent within the walls th' enormous bulk  
Big with destruction ; hence in after times  
It shall be called "The Horse of Spears," the spear  
In its dark sides concealed. The sacred groves  
Are desolate, the temples of the gods  
Flooded with gore, and Priam at the steps  
Ascending to the shrine of guardian Jove  
Hath fall'n and died : much gold, and Phrygian spoils  
Are to the Grecian vessels borne ; the troops  
Expect the fav'ring gale to breathe from shore,  
That after ten long years, which they have passed  
In arms to lay this city low, with joy  
They may behold their children and their wives.  
But I, by Argive Juno, mighty queen,  
O'erpowered, and Pallas, whose united force  
Hath crushed the Phrygians, quit the once famed tower

Of Ilium, and my altars : for when once  
 Wide through a city desolation spreads,  
 The hallowed rites, the worship of the gods  
 Must be neglected. Now with loud laments  
 Of captive dames to their new lords assigned  
 Scamander's banks resound : th' Arcadian some,  
 Some the Thessalian bands, and some the sons  
 Of Theseus, chiefs of Athens, as decides  
 The lot, obtain. Beneath this roof are those  
 Of Troy's unhappy daughters by no lot  
 Disposed, but to the leaders of the host  
 Selected ; these among, by righteous doom  
 A captive led, the Spartan Helena.  
 And Hecuba, if any wish to see  
 Her and her wretched state, before the gates  
 Lies stretched, and pours an ample flood of tears ;  
 And she hath ample cause, for at the tomb  
 Raised to Achilles hath her daughter died,  
 How piteously ! the poor Polyxena ;  
 Priam is fall'n, her sons are fall'n ; and her,  
 Cassandra, whom the royal Phœbus gave  
 To rove a virgin, and declare the fates,  
 To secret nuptials Agamemnon leads  
 Perforce, religion and the gods despised.  
 But, O my town once flourishing, once crowned  
 With beauteous-structured battlements, farewell !  
 Had not Minerva sunk thee in the dust,  
 On thy firm base e'en now thou mightst have stood.

## NEPTUNE, MINERVA.

- Minerva.* Is it permitted me, all former thoughts  
 Of variance laid aside, t' address a god  
 Nearest by lineage to my sire allied,  
 Of mighty power, and honoured by the gods ?
- Neptune.* It is permitted thee : for kindred blood,  
 Royal Minerva, hath a potent charm  
 To reconcile the alienated mind.
- Minerva.* Thy gentleness in anger claims my praise.  
 What I would offer, king, imports us both.
- Neptune.* Hast thou of new aught from the gods to  
 speak,  
 From Jove, or other of the heavenly powers ?

*Minerva.* No : for the sake of Troy I to thy power  
Am come, to use it in one common cause.

*Neptune.* Dost thou, thy former hostile thoughts appeased,  
Pity its ruins blazing in the flames ?

*Minerva.* First speak to this : wilt thou with joint design,  
Joint labour, aid in what I wish to do ?

*Neptune.* Most willingly : but wish to know thy purpose,  
If to the Trojans friendly, or to Greece.

*Minerva.* The Trojans hated once, would I delight,  
To th' Argive host embittering their return.

*Neptune.* Why have thy measures this quick change, in love  
Or hate, whichever betides, too violent ?

*Minerva.* Me knowst thou not how outraged, and my shrine ?

*Neptune.* I know : Cassandra Ajax dragged by force.

*Minerva.* Nor punished by the Grecians, nor reproved.

*Neptune.* Yet by thy power these Grecians wasted Troy.

*Minerva.* Therefore with thee I now would work them woe.

*Neptune.* Thy purpose finds me prompt : what wouldst  
thou do ?

*Minerva.* With rig'rous vengeance sadden their return.

*Neptune.* On land, or when they plough the briny wave ?

*Minerva.* When o'er the deep they steer their course for  
Greece,

The stormy rain, the fierce-descending hail,  
And the dark fury of tempestuous winds  
My sire will send : to me, his word is passed,  
His fiery thunder will he give, to hurl  
Against the Grecians, and with lightning flames  
To burn their ships. Do thou, for thine the power,  
With foaming billows vast and whirling gulfs  
Tempest the vexed Ægean ; with their dead  
Fill the Eubœan bay : that they may learn  
Henceforth with reverence to approach my shrines,  
And pay due honours to the other gods.

*Neptune.* It shall be so : few words this favour needs.  
With tempests will I chafe th' Ægean sea ;  
The shores of Mycone, the Delian rocks,  
Scyrus, and Lemnus, and the rugged brow  
Of steep Caphareus shall with numerous dead  
Be covered. But to high Olympus go,  
The bolts of thunder from thy father's hands  
Receive : then wait till they unmoor their fleet.

Unwise is he, whoe'er of mortals storms  
Beleagu'ed towns, and crushed in ruins wastes  
The temples of the gods, the hallowed tombs  
Where sleep the dead ; for he shall perish soon.  
*Hecuba.* Rise, thou unhappy ; from the cold ground raise  
Thy head, thy neck. This is no longer Troy,  
In Troy we rule no longer. Ah the change  
Of fortune ! Bear the change ; sail with the tide.  
With fortune sail, nor turn the prow of life  
Against the wave, nor struggle with thy fate.—  
Oh woe, woe, woe ! Why is it not allowed  
A wretch like me to moan my country lost,  
My children, and my husband ! Thou high boast  
Of noble ancestry, how art thou shrunk,  
How vanished ! What shall I in silence hold ?  
Or what not hold in silence ? What bewail ?  
In what a woful state are these poor limbs  
Reclined, how ill on this hard bed now stretched ?  
Ah me, my head ! Ah me, my temples ! Ah,  
My sides ! O how I long to change my place,  
To roll, and roll, and shift from side to side,  
Proofs of the restless torture of my mind !  
E'en here th' unhappy have a Muse, to give  
These woes a voice, far other than the notes  
To joy and dance attuned. Ye wingéd barks,  
Which through the purple seas and sheltered bays  
Of Greece, whilst to the inauspicious sound  
Of flutes and oaten pipes your oars kept time,  
With all your streamers flying, proudly sailed  
To sacred Ilium, to the ports of Troy  
Bringing the hated wife of Menelaus,  
A foul disgrace to Castor, and a stain  
Dishonouring Eurotas. She hath slain  
Priam, the reverend sire of fifty children,  
And in this gulf of misery hath plunged  
The wretched Hecuba. My seat is now—  
Ah, what a seat !—at Agamemnon's tent ;  
And I am led, in my old age am led  
A captive from my house, of its hoar hairs,  
Sad argument of grief, this head despoiled.  
But, O ye wretched wives of Trojans once  
Valiant in war, ye virgins, and ye brides

Torn from your loves, Troy smokes : let us lament;  
 And, as the parent bird that o'er her young  
 Swells her shrill notes, I will begin the strain,  
 Not such as in my happier days I raised,  
 Leaning on Priam's sceptre, when my foot  
 In Phrygian measures, by the Graces taught,  
 Led to th' immortal gods the festive dance.

Cho  
 Hec

HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Chorus.* Why, Hecuba, these cries, these cries of woe?  
 Why dost thou raise these loud laments? I hear  
 The wailings, which thou utterest, o'er these roofs  
 Resound; and terror strikes each Trojan dame,  
 That in this tent bemoans her slavery.

*Hecuba.* O children, in the vessels of the Greeks  
 The hand now grasps the oar. O wretched me,  
 What will they do? Will they with spreading sails  
 Far from my country bear my hapless age?

Cho  
 Hec

*Chorus.* I know not; but my mind presages ill.  
 Alas, alas, distracted with our woes,  
 Soon we shall hear, "Ye Trojan dames, come forth  
 The Grecians are preparing their return."

*Hecuba.* Ah, send not now the mad Cassandra to me,  
 That shame to Greece: her ravings to my woe  
 Would add fresh woe. O Troy, unhappy Troy,  
 Thou art no more. Unhappy they who leave thee  
 Unhappy are the living and the slain.

*Chorus.* Ah me! With trembling foot I leave the tent  
 Of Agamemnon, from thee, queen, to learn  
 Whether the sentence of the Greeks be passed  
 To kill me, wretched me; or in the ships  
 The sailors are prepared to plough the main.

*Hecuba.* Early, my child, my soul with terror struck,  
 Was I brought hither; from the Grecians now  
 A herald comes informing me to whom  
 I am assigned—ah wretched me!—a slave.

*Chorus.* Soon will thy lot be cast.

*Hecuba.* Ah me! Ah me!

*Chorus.* Me, miserable me, what Argive leads,  
 Or who of Phthia's vales, or of the isles  
 Encircled by the ocean, far from Troy?

*Hecuba.* To whom am I, unhappy, in what land

Assigned a slave, useless, worn out with age,  
The wretched form of one that is no more,  
A lifeless image on a monument?  
To keep their gates will they assign my charge?  
Or on their children shall my office be  
T' attend, at Troy with royal honours graced?

*Chorus.* Ah, with what plaints thy miseries dost thou scan?

*Hecuba.* No more these hands in the Idæan looms  
The shuttle with alternate cast shall throw;  
No more my children's sportive youth I see;  
Nor, as in youth, shall I to lighter toils  
Be destined, or approach some Grecian's bed:  
The night itself and fortune cheerless frowns.  
But at Pirene's fount shall be my task,  
My wretched task, to draw its sacred streams.

*Chorus.* Oh, to that happy country might we come,  
O'er which th' illustrious Theseus held his reign!

*Hecuba.* But never to Therapnæ, hated town  
Of Helen, seated where Eurotas whirls  
His eddying stream; exposed my servile state  
To Menelaus, who wasted sacred Troy.  
The lovely tract, through which Penæus flows,  
Delightful base, from which his awful height  
Olympus rears, in wealth, so fame reports,  
Abounds, and boasts its blooming fruitfulness.  
This, next the honoured and divine domains  
Where Theseus reigned, would be most pleasing to  
me.

Much have I heard of the Ætnean coast  
Sacred to Vulcan, to the Punic shore  
That rises opposite, the mighty mother  
Of the Sicilian mountains, where the wreath  
Blossoms ever fresh; and of the neighbouring land,  
Sweet habitation in th' Ionian sea,  
Irrigued with the beauteous-flowing stream  
Of Crathis, which the yellow tresses gilds,  
And blessings from its sacred fountains pours  
Through a rich land, that boasts a generous race.

*Chorus.* But from the Grecian host a herald comes,  
Fraught with fresh tidings: hasty is his step.  
What brings he? what announces? For in truth  
We of the Dorian land e'en now are slaves.



TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Talthy.* Thou, Hecuba, hast seen Talthybius oft  
In Troy, a herald from the Grecian host  
In frequent intercourse: but now to thee,  
In past time not unknown, I come, and bring  
The public mandate, which concerns you all.

*Hecuba.* This, this, my friends, ye dames of Troy, long since  
This was my fear.

*Talthy.* You are by lot assigned,  
If this was what you feared.

*Hecuba.* Alas, alas!  
To what Thessalian, or what Phthian town,  
Or to Cadmæan Thebes? I pray thee tell me.

*Talthy.* Singly to single chiefs are you allotted,  
And not together all.

*Hecuba.* To whom, to whom  
Am I appointed, say. What happy fate  
Awaits each Trojan dame?

*Talthy.* I can inform thee:  
But singly ask of each, not all at once.

*Hecuba.* The poor Cassandra, my unhappy daughter,  
Where falls her lot?

*Talthy.* Her, a selected prize,  
The royal Agamemnon hath received.

*Hecuba.* What! For his Spartan spouse a slave? Ah me

*Talthy.* No: but in secret to the nuptial bed.

*Hecuba.* The virgin of Apollo, whom the god  
Radiant with golden locks allowed to live  
In her pure vow of maiden chastity!

*Talthy.* With love the raptured virgin smote his heart.

*Hecuba.* Cast from thee, O my daughter, cast away  
Thy sacred wand, rend off the honoured wreaths,  
The splendid ornaments that grace thy brows.

*Talthy.* Is it not great to share a monarch's bed?

*Hecuba.* But where is she, whom late you took from me  
Where is my daughter?

*Talthy.* Of Polyxena,  
Or of whom else is this inquiry made?

*Hecuba.* To whom is she allotted?

*Talthy.* At the tomb

Raised to Achilles it is hers to serve.

*Hecuba.* Unhappy me! Have I brought forth a child

Doomed at a tomb to serve? But tell me, friend,  
What custom or what rite of Greece is this?

*Talthy.* Pronounce her happy: all with her is well.

*Hecuba.* What mean thy words? Views she the sun's bright  
beams?

*Talthy.* Her doth fate hold from every ill released.

*Hecuba.* What of Andromache, the wretched wife  
Of helméd Hector? Tell me what her fate?

*Talthy.* Her without lot Achilles' son receives.

*Hecuba.* And I, whose age-enfeebled limbs require  
A staff, to whom am I assigned a slave?

*Talthy.* Thee hath Ulysses, king of Ithaca,  
By lot obtained: to him thou art a slave.

*Hecuba.* Ah, let me beat this head, and rend these  
cheeks.

O miserable me! I am enslaved  
To a detested, an insidious foe,  
A creeping viper, who with baleful bite  
Impoisons justice; one, whose double tongue  
With glozing arguments from side to side  
All things perverts, and turns to hostile hate  
What was before most friendly. Mourn for me,  
Ye Trojan dames, for I am wretched, sunk  
To the most abject fortune, woe is me,  
Totally sunk by this ill-fated lot.

*Chorus.* Thy fortune, venerable queen, I know;  
But mine what Argive or what Greek commands?

*Talthy.* Go, ye attendants; with what speed you may  
Conduct Cassandra hither; I must give her  
To the king's hand. The other captives then,  
Each as allotted, lead to their new lords.—  
But what is this? Why flames the blazing torch  
Within? What mean these Trojan dames? To fire  
The inmost tent? that, since the hour draws nigh  
When from this land they must perforce be borne  
To Argos, they may perish in the flames,  
Seeking to die; ill brooks th' excessive love  
Of freedom woes like these. Open these doors,  
Open, lest what to these may give delight,  
And grief to Greece, may to my blame be charged.

*Hecuba.* It is not so; they raise no flames; but forth  
My frenetic child, Cassandra, rushes to us.

CASSANDRA, HECUBA, TALTHYBIUS, CHORUS.

*Cassan.* Wave the torch, and spread its light ;  
 Thus I bear it blazing bright,  
 Rev'rence and illume the shrine ;  
 Royal Hymen, it is thine.  
 See, the happy bridegroom see,  
 And the happy bride in me :  
 At Argos I shall mount the nuptial bed,  
 Royal Hymen, by thee led.  
 Since thy tears, my mother, flow,  
 And thy heart is rent with woe,  
 For my slaughtered father's fate,  
 And my country's ruined state,  
 At my spousals I will raise  
 A fire shall shine, shall flame, shall blaze,  
 And, royal Hymen, on the bridal night  
 Give to Hecate the light,  
 For a virgin's nuptial bands ;  
 Sacred custom this demands.  
 Nimble let your feet advance,  
 Quiv'ring high in festive dance,  
 As if Priam's prosperous throne  
 Bright with royal splendours shone.  
 The choir is hallowed: with them, Phœbus, move !  
 In thy sacred laurel grove  
 Offerings at thy shrine I lay,  
 Hymen, 'tis my bridal day.  
 Lead the dance, my mother, lead,  
 Quick in varying motions tread,  
 And, my gliding steps to grace,  
 Light the mazy measure trace.  
 To royal Hymen raise, O hallowed train,  
 Raise the joy-announcing strain ;  
 Hail the bride with songs of joy,  
 Gorgeous-vested nymphs of Troy ;  
 Hail the bridegroom, to my bed  
 By the Fates' appointment led.

*Chorus.* Wilt thou not, queen, thy raving daughter hold,  
 That she appear not 'midst the host of Greece  
 Possessed with this indecent levity ?

*Hecuba.* O Vulcan, thou indeed the nuptial torch  
 Of mortals bearest. but a baleful flame

Dost thou now wave, and void of each fond hope.  
Alas, my daughter, little did I think  
That ever thou shouldst wed beneath the spear,  
Beneath the arms of Greece! Give me the torch;  
Ill it beseems thee frenetic thus, with step  
Thus wild, to bear its flame: nor to thy mind  
Have thy misfortunes brought more sober sense;  
But, my poor child, thy state remains the same.  
Bear in the torches; and, ye Trojan dames,  
For tears exchange her nuptial melody.

*Cassan.* Mother, adorn my head; for I have gained  
A conquest: in my nuptials with a king  
Rejoice. Come, lead me. If I go too slow,  
Push me by force; for this is not Apollo.  
Th' illustrious Agamemnon, king of Greece,  
Weds me; but in these nuptials he shall find  
More woe than Paris when he wedded Helen;  
For I will kill him, and lay waste his house;  
Thus for my brothers' and my father's death  
I will have vengeance: but no words of this:  
I will say nothing of the axe, which goes  
Into my neck, and that of others too;  
Nor of the contest where a mother bleeds  
(This shall my nuptials raise); nor of the house  
Of Atreus sunk in ruins: I will show  
This city than the Grecians far more blest  
(I feel th' inspiring god, but will awhile  
Bid the prophetic fury cease to swell):  
They for one woman, and one fatal bed  
Sought Helen, and lost thousands; their wise chief  
Himself, to gain what most the soul abhors,  
Hath thrown away what most it loves, and given  
The sweet domestic pleasures of his children  
To win his brother's wife; yet was she borne  
Consentingly, not forcibly away.  
When to Scamander's banks they came, they died;  
Nor from their country, or its high-tow'red towns,  
Were they driven forth: those whom the sword  
destroyed  
Their children saw no more, nor were their limbs  
By their wives' hands in decent vestments wrapt,  
But in a foreign land they lie. At home

Like desolation reigns : their widowed wives  
 Are dead ; their parents, childless, have in vain  
 Reared offspring in their houses ; not a son  
 Survives to pour libations at their tombs.  
 Such are the triumphs of this martial host.  
 Deeds of impurity are better hushed  
 In silence : never Muse be mine, to chaunt  
 What raises on the modest cheek a blush.  
 The Trojans, what is glory's brightest grace,  
 Died for their country : they, beneath the spear  
 Who fell, were by their friends borne home, and dead  
 Found in their native land a sepulchre,  
 Entombed by those from whom those rites were due  
 But such, as fell not in the field, each day  
 Dwelt with their wives and children ; whilst the  
 Greeks

Were strangers to that sweet society.  
 Mournful the fate of Hector seems to thee :  
 But weigh it well : he dies, among the brave  
 Esteemed the bravest ; this high fame the Greeks  
 By their arrival raised ; had they not come  
 The hero's virtues had remained obscure.  
 Paris espoused the daughter of high Jove ;  
 Had she not been his bride, he would at home  
 Have formed some mean alliance, unrenowned.  
 War then the man, whom prudence rules, will shun  
 But if its flames are kindled, no mean crown  
 He wins who bravely for his country dies :  
 Not to act bravely is inglorious shame.  
 Therefore behoves thee, mother, not to wail  
 Thy country, or my bed ; for those to thee  
 Whose deeds have been most hostile, and to me,  
 I by my nuptials to the dust will bow.

*Chorus.* How sweetly at thy house's ills thou smilest,  
 Chaunting what haply thou wilt not show true !

*Talthy.* But that Apollo hath with frenzy hurt  
 Thy sense, unpunished with such taunting speech  
 Thou shouldst not from this country send the chief  
 But what commands respect, and is held high  
 As wise, is nothing better than the mean  
 Of no repute : for this most potent king  
 Of all the Grecians, the much honoured son

Of Atreus, is enamoured with his prize,  
This frenetic raver. I am a poor man,  
Yet would I not receive her to my bed.  
For thee, since thou hast not thy perfect sense,  
All thy reproaches on the Greeks and all  
Thy praises of the Trojans, to the winds  
I give to scatter them. But to the ships  
Attend me, beauteous minion of our chief.  
Thou, since Ulysses wills to lead thee with him,  
Follow ; a virtuous lady shalt thou serve,  
As they, who came to Ilium, speak her fame.

*Cassan.* This is a busy slave. What one name suits  
All heralds ? The abhorrence of mankind,  
Ye ministers of tyrants and of states,  
And dost thou say that to Ulysses' house  
My mother shall be led ? Where are the words  
Of Phœbus then, which say, by me made known,  
Here she shall die ? The rest revile I not :  
But he, unhappy, knows not what a train  
Of sufferings waits him, so that he shall deem  
Mine and the Phrygians' ills, with his compared,  
Treasures of gold : for after ten long years  
To ten long years here wasted, he shall reach  
His native land alone ; but visit first  
The straits, amidst whose gulfs, that now disgorge  
And now resorb the floods, Charybdis holds  
Her terrible abode ; the blood-stained cave  
Of the huge Cyclops, mountain savage, gorged  
With flesh where life yet quivers ; Circe's isle,  
Whose charmed cup transforms whoever taste  
To swine ; tempestuous seas with wrecks o'erspread ;  
Men in the flow'ry Lotus who delight ;  
The sacred heifers of the sun, whose flesh  
Shall send forth lowings, to Ulysses sound  
Of horror : to be brief, to Pluto's realms  
Alive shall he descend : and from the waves  
Escaped, returning to his country find  
A thousand ills. But why repeat the toils  
That wait Ulysses ? Go, that I with speed  
May wed a bridegroom in the shades below.  
Thou, who in thought some glorious deed art now  
Achieving, leader of the Grecian host,

Wretch, shall be buried wretchedly by night,  
 Not in the day; and me, a livid corse,  
 Naked, cast out, the torrent floods shall leave  
 In their rough channels, nigh my bridegroom's tomb  
 A prey to beasts, this priestess of Apollo.  
 Ye garlands of the gods, most dear to me,  
 Prophetic ornaments, farewell: the feasts,  
 In which I once delighted, are to me  
 No more. Begone! I rend you from me. While  
 I yet am chaste, I give them to the winds,  
 To toss, to scatter them, prophetic king!  
 Where is the leader's bark? How shall my foot  
 Mount its tall sides? No longer shall thy sails  
 Wait for the breathing gales; but thou shalt bear me  
 A Fury, an Erinys, from this land.  
 Farewell, my mother! Do not shed a tear.  
 O my loved country, O my brother, sunk  
 To the dark realms below, O father soon  
 Shall you receive me; to your shades I come  
 Triumphant from the ruin of the house  
 Of Atreus, by whose sons we thus are fall'n!

## HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Chorus.* Ye, who attend the aged Hecuba,  
 Behold you not the queen, how to the ground  
 Speechless she sinks? Shall not your hands with care  
 Support her? Wretches, will you let her age  
 Lie on the earth? Haste, raise her, upright raise her!

*Hecuba.* Forbear, ye virgins; what was pleasing once  
 Pleases no more: here let me lie thus fall'n,  
 A fall that suits what I have suffered, what  
 I suffer, and shall suffer. O ye gods,  
 Unkind associates I indeed invoke,  
 Yet when affliction rends the anguished heart,  
 We with becoming grace invoke the gods  
 First it is pleasing to me to recount  
 My happier fortunes: thus my woes shall raise  
 A stronger pity. Royal was my birth,  
 And marriage joined me to a royal house;  
 There I was mother of illustrious sons,  
 Sons with superior excellence adorned  
 Above the Phrygians; such no Trojan dame,

No Grecian, no Barbarian e'er could boast ;  
These I saw fall'n beneath the Grecian spear,  
And laid my severed tresses on their tomb.  
For Priam too, their father, flowed my tears ;  
His fate I heard not from report, but saw it,  
These eyes beheld him murdered at the altar  
Of guardian Jove ; my vanquished city stormed ;  
My daughters, whom I nurtured high in hope  
Of choosing honourable nuptials for them,  
For others nurtured from my hands are rent ;  
There is no hope that me they e'er shall see,  
And I shall never see them more. Th' extreme,  
The height of my afflicting ills is this :  
I to some house shall go a hoary slave,  
To some base task, most irksome to my age,  
Assigned ; or at their doors to keep the keys  
A portress shall I wait, the mother once  
Of Hector, or to labour at the mill ;  
For royal couches, on the ground to make  
My rugged bed ; and o'er these worn-out limbs  
The tattered remnant of a worn-out robe,  
Unseemly to my happier state, to throw.  
Ah, for one woman's nuptial bed, what woes  
Are mine, and will be mine ! Alas, my child,  
My poor Cassandra, madd'ning with the gods,  
By what misfortunes is thy purity  
Defiled ? And where art thou, Polyxena,  
O thou unhappy ! Thus of all my sons  
And all my daughters, many though they were,  
Not one is left to soothe my miseries.  
Why do you raise me, virgins ? With what hope  
Lead you this foot, which once with stately port  
In Troy advanced, but now a slave, to seek  
A bed of leaves strewn on the ground, a stone  
My pillow, there to lie, to perish there  
Wasted with tears ? Then deem not of the great  
Now flourishing as happy, ere they die.

CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

For Troy, O Muse, attune thy woe,  
And steep in tears the solemn-breathing song ;



To such a theme such notes belong :  
 For Troy unwonted measures now shall flow,  
 Shall tell my sorrows, how beneath  
 The guileful fabric, big with death,  
 I fell a captive to the Argive spear :  
 When from th' enormous beast, that hides  
 A host within its caverned sides,  
 With golden trappings hung around,  
 Rolled to the gates with thund'ring sound,  
 Issuing in arms the chiefs of Greece appear.  
 But from the rock of Ilium high  
 With shouts the blinded Phrygians cry,  
 "Go, from your toils released, ye sons of 'Troy.  
 This hallowed fabric draw with joy :  
 To Jove-born Pallas place the pledge divine  
 In favoured Ilium's rampired shrine."  
 The young, the old promiscuous throng,  
 And roll with songs of joy the fraudulent pest along.

*Antistrophe.*

From every street with eager pace,  
 The pines of Ida flaming in their hands,  
 Rush to the gates the Trojan bands,  
 To Pallas in her favoured tower to place  
 The fabric formed with Argive wiles,  
 The pest which Phrygia's state beguiles,  
 The heaven-framed present of the unyoked steed :  
 With twisted cables thrown around  
 They drag it o'er the fatal ground,  
 Like a new bark in gallant state,  
 To Pallas in her rocky seat.  
 To toil and joy the shades of night succeed :  
 The Libyan pipe swells clear and high,  
 Attuned to Phrygian melody ;  
 To the light notes in many an airy round  
 The frolic virgins nimbly bound,  
 And joyful as they dance their voices raise,  
 Sweet warbling spritely-fancied lays.  
 In every house the blazing fires  
 Sink at the hour of rest, and their swart light  
 expires.

## *Epode.*

Then too my vaulted roofs around  
 The voice of joy was heard to sound ;  
 We to Diana raised the strain,  
 Chaste huntress-queen that leads the mountain train.  
 Sudden a wild tumultuous roar  
 With shudd'ring horror strikes our souls :  
 Loud and more loud the city o'er  
 To Pergamus it deep'ning rolls :  
 My dear, dear infants round their mother prest,  
 And grasped with trembling hands my vest.  
 Now, by Minerva's guardian care,  
 Rushed from its ambush the imprisoned war :  
 Round the polluted altars slain  
 In blood are rolled the sons of Troy :  
 O'er the rich rooms, once scenes of joy,  
 Horror and desolation reign,  
 And bear to Greece, her victor sons t' adorn,  
 The crown from weeping Phrygia borne.

HECUBA, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

*Chorus.* See, royal lady, on this foreign car  
 Andromache is borne ; and at her breast,  
 Which trembles to the motion of the wheels,  
 Astyanax, the son of Hector, laid.

*Hecuba.* Whither, unhappy woman, art thou borne,  
 Placed in that car beside the brazen arms  
 Of Hector, and the spoils by the strong spear  
 Rent from the Phrygians? Distant far from Troy  
 In Phthia these the proud son of Achilles  
 Shall hang, to crown the temples of the gods.

*Andro.* My Grecian lords force me away.

*Hecuba.* Ah me !

*Andro.* Why dost thou heave my sighs?

*Hecuba.* Ah wretched me !

*Andro.* That for my sorrows—

*Hecuba.* Seest thou this, O Jove !

*Andro.* And my distresses rise.

*Hecuba.* Alas, my children !

*Andro.* We were thy children once.

*Hecuba.* My state is fall'n ;

Troy too is fall'n.

*Andro.*

Unhappy !

*Hecuba.*

And my sons,

My noble sons are fall'n.

*Andro.*

Alas, alas !

*Hecuba.* Alas my ills, the miserable fate*Andro.* Of ruined Troy.*Hecuba.*

Which smokes upon the ground.

*Andro.* Oh, wouldst thou come, my husband !*Hecuba.*

Thou dost call

My son, unhappy, in the realms below !

*Andro.* Thou bulwark of thy wife !*Hecuba.*

And thou, whose soul

Swelled high against the Grecians, Priam, once

The aged father of my children, lead,

O lead me to the gloomy realms below !

*Chorus.* These griefs are great.*Hecuba.*

And dreadful are the ills

We suffer.

*Chorus.* For thy ruined country : woes,

Such is the pleasure of the gods, succeed

To woes. Nor hath thy son escaped from death,

Who for a bed abhorred hath sunk in dust

The towers of Troy, and near the rampired rock

Of Pallas stretched the bodies of the slain,

Welt'ring in blood, by vultures to be torn :

And Troy is bowed beneath the servile yoke.

*Hecuba.* My country, my unhappy country, thee

Wasted I weep.

*Chorus.*

Thou seest its wretched end.

*Hecuba.* And thee my house, where oft I was a mother.*Chorus.* Unhappy children, wasted is your town,

Your mother desolate.

*Hecuba.*

What strains are these,

What strains of woe ! Tears after tears stream  
down

In sorrow for my house : the dead forgets

His sorrows, and his tears stream down no more.

*Chorus.* How sweet are tears to those who suffer ills ?

Sweet are the strains of lamentation, sweet

The mournful Muse that tunes her notes to woe.

*Andro.* Mother of Hector, that brave chief, whose spear

Once pierced the Grecian squadrons, seest thou this ?

- Hecuba.* I see th' appointment of the gods ; the low  
How they exalt, and hurl the mighty down.
- Andro.* I, with my child, am led away, the spoil  
Of war : th' illustrious progeny of kings,  
O fatal change, is sunk to slavery.
- Hecuba.* Necessity is rig'rous : from me late  
Cassandra went, torn from my arms by force.
- Andro.* Alas ! Another Ajax then, it seems,  
Thy daughter finds : but thou hast other ills
- Hecuba.* Unmeasured and unnumbered are my ills :  
Afflictions with afflictions still contend.
- Andro.* Polyxena, thy daughter is no more :  
Devoted to Achilles, on his tomb  
An off'ring to the lifeless dead she fell.
- Hecuba.* Ah wretched me ! This was the dread event  
Talthybius hinted to me in dark terms.
- Andro.* I saw her, and descending from this car  
Wrapt the vests round her, and bewailed her dead.
- Hecuba.* Alas, my daughter, what unhallowed rites !  
Alas, alas ! unseemly hast thou perished.
- Andro.* She perished, as she perished : but her fate  
In death is happier far than mine who live.
- Hecuba.* 'Tis not one thing, my child, to live or die :  
The living hopes await, the dead are nothing.
- Andro.* Hear, that with pleasure I may touch thy soul  
Not to be born, I argue, and to die,  
Are equal : but to die is better far  
Than to live wretched ; for he knows not grief  
Who hath no sense of misery : but to fall  
From fortune's blessed height, to the low state  
Of abject wretchedness, distracts the soul  
With the keen sense of former happiness.  
Like as the light of life she ne'er had seen,  
Polyxena is dead, and of her ills  
Knows nothing : I, who aimed at glorious rank,  
And reached my aim, from fortune widely erred :  
All that to prudent matrons gives a grace,  
In Hector's house was ever my employ.  
First, for in this to women blame is due,  
Charged or not charged, to such as rove abroad,  
I checked this wand'ring humour, and remained  
At home, within my house ; nor gay discourse

Of females there admitted, but intent  
 On ordering what was useful, deemed myself  
 Well occupied. With silence of the tongue  
 And cheerfulness of look I entertained  
 My husband: where my province to command  
 I knew, and where to yield obedience to him.  
 The fame of this was bruited through the host  
 Of Greece, and wrought my ruin; for the son  
 Of fierce Achilles, soon as I was made  
 A captive, wished to take me as his wife,  
 Doomed in the house of those, whose slaught'ring hands  
 I rue, to be a slave. From my fond heart  
 Could I rend Hector, and expand my breast  
 To this new husband, faithless to the dead  
 Should I appear: if I disdain his love,  
 I shall excite the malice of my lords.  
 Short time, they say, to a new lord disarms  
 A woman's hate: but her my soul abhors,  
 Who for new nuptials slights her former husband,  
 And loves another: e'en the social steed,  
 Divided from its fellow, draws the yoke  
 Reluctant; yet the beast, by nature formed  
 Less excellent, nor speech nor reason knows.  
 O my loved Hector, I was blest in thee,  
 Thou wast the lord of all my wishes, great  
 In understanding, noble birth, and wealth,  
 And valour: from my father's house thou first  
 Ledd'st me a virgin to the bridal bed:  
 Now thou are perished, and I mount the bark  
 For Greece, a captive to the servile yoke.  
 Hath not the death then of Polyxena,  
 Whom thou bewailest, lighter ills than mine!  
 For not to me e'en Hope, which still is left  
 To all of mortal race, remains; no thought  
 That better fortune e'er will visit me  
 With pleasing expectation cheats my mind.

*Chorus.* Alike our suft'rings; and thou teachest me,  
 Thine own ills wailing, my unhappy state.

*Hecuba.* I never entered bark; my knowledge springs  
 From what in picture I have seen, or heard  
 From others. When a storm, whose moderate force  
 May be sustained, the curling billows swells,

With prompt alacrity the sailors toil  
 To guide the vessel safe ; one at the helm  
 His station takes, one tends the sails, one plies  
 The pump : but if the wild tempestuous sea  
 Mocks their vain efforts, they to fortune yield,  
 And leave her to the rolling of the waves.  
 So fares it now with me : with various ills  
 Encompassed I am silent, give them way,  
 And check my vain complaints ; for from the gods  
 This cruel storm o'erpowers me. But do thou,  
 O my loved child, on Hector's fate no more  
 Fix thy sad thoughts ; not all thy streaming tears  
 Will save him : honour then thy present lord,  
 And with thy gentle manners win his soul ;  
 This doing, thou shalt cheer thy friends, and train  
 This child, my Hector's son, to manhood, strong  
 To succour Troy ; that sons from him may spring,  
 Who shall again the towers of Ilium raise,  
 And once more to its state restore the town.  
 But trouble yet perchance from trouble springs ;  
 This Grecian officer I see again  
 Advancing to us, bearing new commands.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

*Talthy.* Thou wife of Hector, of the Phrygian once  
 The bravest, do not hate me : for my tongue  
 Unwillingly will utter what the Greeks  
 Decree and the Pelopidæ command.

*Andro.* Why with this tragic proem dost thou greet me ?

*Talthy.* It is decreed thy son—how shall I speak it !

*Andro.* What ? that he have not the same lord with me ?

*Talthy.* None of the Grecians e'er shall be his lord.

*Andro.* To leave him here, a relic of the Trojans ?

*Talthy.* I cannot utter, but with pain, thy ills.

*Andro.* I praise thy modest awe, speak thou but good.

*Talthy.* This great ill thou must know : they slay thy  
 son.

*Andro.* This than my marriage is a greater ill.

*Talthy.* Ulysses 'midst th' assembled Greeks prevails.

*Andro.* Ah, these are ills too grievous to be borne.

*Talthy.* Not to bring up a valiant warrior's son.

*Andro.* Thus for his own sons may his voice prevail !

*Talthy.* But that they cast him from the towers of Troy.  
In this sad trial be thy prudence shown :  
Withhold him not, with noble fortitude  
Support thy griefs : nor think that thou hast power,  
Where all thou canst is nothing. Thou canst find  
No succour : it behoves thee weigh this well.  
Low lies thy city, low thy husband lies,  
Thou art a captive : we have force enough  
Against one woman. Wish not then to strive ;  
Let no indecent, no despicable deed  
Dishonour thee. Nor would I have thee vent  
Thy curses on the Greeks ; for shouldst thou speak  
What shall disgust the troops, thy son perchance  
May lie unpitied, and denied the rites  
Of sepulture : but if thou bear thine ills  
In silence and with fortitude, his corse  
Will not be left unburied, and thyself  
Wilt from the Grecians find more courtesy.

*Andro.* O, my dear child, my fondly cherished son,  
Thou by the foes shalt die, ah me ! and leave  
Thy wretched mother. Yes, thy father's worth  
Shall kill thee, which to others is a shield  
Yielding protection. In an evil hour  
For thee thy father's virtues are renowned.  
O my unhappy bed, and nuptial rites,  
Which led me to the house of Hector, there  
Not to be mother of a son to fall  
A victim by the Grecians, but to reign  
Lord of the fruitful Asia ! Dost thou weep,  
My son ? Hast thou a sense of thy ill fate ?  
Why dost thou clasp me with thy hands, why hold  
My robes, and shelter thee beneath my wings  
Like a young bird ? No more my Hector comes  
Returning from the tomb, he grasps no more  
His glitt'ring spear, bringing protection to thee ;  
No more thy father's kindred, or the force  
Of the brave Phrygians : but from Ilium's height,  
By merciless hands hurled headlong, shalt thou fall,  
And crushed breathe out thy life. O soft embrace,  
And to thy mother dear ! O fragrant breath !  
In vain I swathed thy infant limbs, in vain  
I gave thee nurture at this breast, and toiled

Wasted with care. If ever, now embrace,  
Now clasp thy mother, throw thine arms around  
My neck, and join thy cheek, thy lips to mine.  
Why, O ye Grecians, studying barb'rous ills,  
Why will you kill my son? He hath not wronged  
you.

Daughter of Tyndarus, but not of Jove,  
From many fathers must I deem thee sprung,  
From Vengeance first, then Hate, from Slaughter,  
Death,

And all the ills earth breeds : for ne'er from Jove  
Durst I pronounce thy birth. Thou fatal pest  
To many Phrygians, and to many Greeks,  
Perdition seize thee ! By thy beauteous eyes  
Thou vilely hast destroyed the realms of Troy.  
Here, take him, bear him, hurl him from the  
height,

If ye must hurl him, feast upon his flesh :  
For from the gods hath ruin fall'n on us :  
We have no power to save my child from death.  
Cover this wretched body, wrap it close,  
Cast it into your galley ; for I come  
To glorious nuptials, having lost my son.

*Chorus.* Unhappy Troy, what numbers hast thou lost,  
Through one vile woman, and her hateful bed !

*Andro.* Forbear, my son, forbear thy fond embrace  
Of thy afflicted mother. Go, ascend  
The summit of those towers, thy father's once,  
There leave thy life, for so hath Greece decreed  
Take him : fit herald of this deed is he,  
Who knows no touch of pity or of shame,  
But rather to your mandate gives assent.

*Hecuba.* O child, O son of my unhappy son,  
We of thy life, beyond our thoughts, are reft,  
I, and thy mother ! What can I, poor boy,  
What can I do for thee, but smite this head,  
And beat this breast ? That we can give thee  
that

Is in our power. Ah me, what griefs for Troy  
I suffer, what for thee ! Is there an ill  
We have not ? What is wanting to the woes,  
Which all the dreadful band of Ruin brings ?



HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

Thou lord of Salamis, where love  
 The honey-gath'ring bees to rove,  
 Thou, who didst hold thy island-seat  
 Around whose rocks the billows beat,  
 Whose hallowed mounds first boast to show  
**Ranged** down their sloping sides the olive bough,  
 Of blue-eyed Pallas heavenly crown,  
 And glory of her polished town :  
 Thou with Alcmena's son, whose hand  
 Grasped the strong bow, heldst high command.  
**Thy** soul, like his, to glorious action bold,  
 To Troy, O Telamon, to Troy,  
 Our rampired city to destroy,  
**Thou** camst, from Greece thou camst in times of old.

*Antistrophe 1.*

When, raging for the steeds denied,  
 Of Greece he led the blooming pride ;  
 Where Simois pours his beauteous flood  
 The hero's barks at anchor stood ;  
 Dauntless he leaped upon the strand,  
**His** bow and arrows grasping in his hand :  
 Laomedon with wild affright  
**Marked** how they winged their slaught'ring flight.  
 Though Phœbus squared each polished stone,  
 The high-raised rampires are o'erthrown ;  
**Around** the ruddy flames devouring rise,  
 And Troy a heap of ruin lies :  
 Twice raged the spear around her walls,  
**And** twice with thund'ring sound the city falls.

*Strophe 2.*

**In** vain then at the golden bowls of Jove  
 Has thou thy honoured place,  
 Thy steps composed with sweetest grace,  
 Presenting at the feast divine  
 To heaven's high king the sparkling wine ;

Vain, Dardan boy, thy glorious charge above ;  
For war and wasting flames destroy,  
Sunk to the ground, thy native Troy.  
The sea-washed shores around  
Loud cries and shrieks resound,  
As for her young when the poor bird complains,  
And anguish swells her strains :  
Their husbands some, and some their sons deplore,  
Their mothers some, with age that bow,  
Lament with pious woe.  
Thy brimmed baths are now no more,  
A silent waste the circus lies,  
Once thy loved scene of manly exercise,  
But thou the throne of Jove beside,  
Blooming in all youth's roseate pride,  
Sweetly serene dost woo each grace  
To give new beauties to thy face :  
Yet Priam's realms lie waste, a desert drear,  
Beneath the Grecian spear.

*Antistrophe 2.*

O Love, O Love, that to the seats of Troy,  
Thy gently glowing fire  
Kindling in heavenly breasts desire,  
Didst once direct thy pleasing flight,  
To what a splendid, stately height,  
Whilst gods her dear alliance sought with joy,  
Didst thou exalt her glorious fame ?  
Now must thou bear another name ;  
No more joy-kindling Love,  
But the reproach of Jove.  
This fatal morn, with silver-waving wings  
Which light to mortals brings,  
Hath seen destruction wide its ravage spread,  
Hath seen the towers of Troy laid low  
Beneath th' insulting foe :  
With offspring yet to bless her bed  
Her husband from this land she bore ;  
The favoured youth yon orient regions o'er  
Her four ethereal coursers bear,  
Placed by her in the golden car.

Hence to thy country Hope might rise,  
 Graced with the favour of the skies :  
 But all the love, which touched the gods with joy,  
 Shrinks from the aid of Troy.

MENELAUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Mene.* O thou bright-beaming radiance of this sun,  
 Helen in thee, my wife, these hands shall seize,  
 After the many toils I have sustained,  
 I, and the Grecian host. I came to Troy,  
 Not for a woman, as some lightly think,  
 But armed with vengeance 'gainst the man who broke  
 Each hospitable law, and from my house  
 Bore, as his spoil, my wife. But the just gods  
 He hath his meed, he and his country fall'n  
 Beneath the arms of Greece. The Spartan dame,  
 For not with pleasure can my tongue pronounce  
 Her name who was my wife, once was, I come  
 To lead from hence: for in this tent, among  
 The other captive dames of Troy enrolled,  
 Is she detained. For they, whose toiling spear  
 Achieved her, have presented her to me  
 To kill her, or, if such my will, to Greece  
 Alive to lead her: but my purpose is  
 The death of Helen to forbear at Troy,  
 And bear her in my stout bark o'er the seas  
 To Greece; and there, in vengeance for my friends  
 Who beneath Ilium died, to give her death.  
 But, ye attendants, go into the tent,  
 Bring her forth, drag her by the hair with blood  
 Deeply polluted: when the fav'ring winds  
 Breathe in our sails, to Greece shall she be sent.

*Hecuba.* O Jove, who rulest the rolling of the earth,  
 And o'er it hast thy throne, whoe'er thou art,  
 The ruling mind, or the necessity  
 Of nature, I adore thee. Dark thy ways  
 And silent are thy steps; to mortal man  
 Yet thou with justice all things dost ordain.

*Mene.* Why to the gods dost thou renew thy vows?

*Hecuba.* I praise thy resolution, Menelaus,  
 If thou shalt kill thy wife. But fly her sight:  
 She captivates the eyes of men, takes towns,

Sets houses all on fire ; such blandishments  
She hath t' allure the soul ; I know her well,  
Thou knowst her, and all they that suffer by her.

HELENA, MENELAUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Helena.* This is a prelude which may well cause fear ;  
For by thy servants, Menelaus, by force  
I from the tent am dragged. But little wants  
T' assure me that I am detested by thee.  
Yet I would ask thee, by the states of Greece  
And thee touching my life what is decreed.

*Mene.* Justice hath not pronounced fixed sentence on  
thee ;  
But all the host of Greece, whom thou hast  
wronged,  
Give thee to me, and thou by me shalt die.

*Helena.* May I have leave 'gainst this to urge my plea,  
That, if I die, not justly I shall die ?

*Mene.* Not to hold converse came I, but to kill thee.

*Hecuba.* Yet hear her, Menelaus, nor let her die,  
Her bland excuse not urged : but to her plea  
Let me reply, for of the ills in Troy  
Thou nothing knowst ; but when I sum them all,  
From death no refuge shall be left to her.

*Mene.* This requires leisure ; yet if she would speak,  
She is allowed : but let her know thy words  
Gain her this leave ; no grace to her I grant.

*Helena.* Let me or well or ill appear to speak,  
Thou no reply wilt haply deign me, deemed [to  
MENELAUS]

An enemy : yet to the crime, of which  
I know thou wilt accuse me, I will make [to HECUBA]  
Reply, and to thy charge my pleas oppose,  
'Gainst thee my charge. She first, then, to these ills  
Gave birth, when she gave Paris birth ; and next  
The aged Priam ruined Troy and thee,  
The infant not destroying, at his birth  
Denounced a baleful firebrand. Hear from thence  
What followed. Twixt the rival goddesses  
Paris was judge. From Pallas was his meed  
To lead the Phrygian arms, and conquer Greece ;  
From Juno, if to her his voice adjudged

The prize, to hold o'er Asia and the bounds  
Of Europe his wide empire : but, my form  
Extolling, Venus promised to his arms  
To give me, if in beauty she surpassed  
The other goddesses. Mark now th' event.  
The prize is given to Venus ; and so far  
My nuptials profit Greece : you are not fall'n  
Beneath Barbarians or a tyrant's sway,  
Nor to protect your country stand in arms.  
I, in what Greece is happy, am undone,  
Sold for my beauty, and with cruel taunts  
Reviled for what my head deserves a crown.  
But thou wilt say that to an obvious charge  
I have not yet replied, that from thy house  
I fled by stealth. Her son, for ruin born,  
Or Paris called or Alexander, came,  
And brought no feeble goddess in his train :  
Him, thou most worthless, leaving in thy house,  
From Sparta didst thou hoist thy sails for Crete.  
Well, what ensued of thee I will not ask,  
But of myself : what could induce my thought,  
My country for a stranger, and my house  
Betrayed, to follow him ? Thy vengeance rouse  
Against the goddess, and be thou than Jove  
More potent ; he o'er other gods bears rule,  
But is her slave : I then may pardon find.  
But hence against me thou mayst urge a charge  
Of specious argument : When Paris died,  
And low in earth was laid, behoved me then,  
Since by no god my nuptials then were wrought,  
To leave his house, and to the Grecian ships  
To come. On this I earnestly was bent ;  
Witness, ye guards who kept the gates, and you  
Who stationed on the walls held careful watch,  
How oft you found me from the battlements  
With ropes attempting to slide down by stealth :  
But this new husband seizing me by force,  
Deiphobus, the Trojans much averse,  
Held me his wife. How then can justice doom me  
To die ? With justice how can I be slain  
By thee, my husband, since he wedded me  
By force ? Thus from my house was I a slave

Sold for the prize of conquest. If thou aim  
T' exceed the gods in power, the thought is folly.

*Chorus.* Defend thy children and thy country, queen ;  
Refute her glozing speech. Her words are fair,  
Her actions foul. In this much danger lies.

*Hecuba.* The goddesses my voice shall first defend,  
And show that she unjustly charges blame  
On them. For Juno never will I deem,  
Or virgin Pallas, to such frenzy sunk,  
That Argos to Barbarians she would sell,  
Or Pallas to the Phrygians e'er enslave  
Her favoured Athens, who in sportive mood  
And dainty dalliance to Ida came,  
For form contesting. Whence this strong desire  
In royal Juno of superior charms?  
Was it to win a greater lord than Jove?  
Did Pallas, of her father who had asked  
To keep her virgin purity unsoiled,  
Flying connubial rites, aim now t' obtain  
The nuptials of some god? Forbear to charge  
These goddesses with folly, to set off  
Thy own misdeeds ; no credence with the wise  
Wilt thou acquire. But Venus, thou hast said  
(High subject this for laughter), with my son  
Came to the house of Menelaus. At rest  
In heaven remaining, could she not have brought her,  
And e'en Amyclæ, had she pleased, to Troy?  
My son was with surpassing beauty graced ;  
And thy fond passion, when he struck thy sight,  
Became a Venus : for each foolish fondness  
To mortals is a Venus, and the soul  
Bereaves of reason. When thine eyes beheld him  
Glitt'ring in rich barbaric vests and gold,  
Thy passions were to madness soon inflamed,  
At Argos little hadst thou been with wealth  
Acquainted. Quitting Sparta, thou hadst hope  
The Phrygian state, flowing with gold, would yield  
Thy proud expense supplies ; nor could the house  
Of Menelaus within its narrow walls  
Give thy insulting vanities free scope.  
Well, let that pass. My son, thou sayst, by force  
Bore thee away. What Spartan of that force

Was sensible? With what cries didst thou call  
 Castor, thy brother, to thy aid, then strong  
 In manhood's prime, then living, to the stars  
 Not then exalted? When thou camest to Troy,  
 And, following close, the Grecians, raged the spear  
 In conflict fierce; whene'er his arms obtained  
 Aught of advantage, Menelaus thy praise  
 Extolled, to grieve my son in that his love  
 Met with a potent rival: if success  
 Favoured the Trojans, he was nothing then.  
 Thine eyes were fixed on Fortune; this thy care,  
 To follow her; to Virtue thou wouldst pay  
 No homage. Yet with ropes didst thou attempt,  
 Such is thy plea, down from the walls to slide  
 By stealth, as if detained against thy will:  
 By whom wast thou surprised in act to fix  
 The pendent rope or point the sharpened sword?  
 This would a woman of a gen'rous soul,  
 Who sorrowed for her husband lost, have done.  
 Yet much did I admonish thee, and oft,  
 "Leave, O my daughter, leave us: other wives  
 My sons shall wed: I to the Grecian ships  
 Will send thee secretly, that war no more  
 'Twixt Greece and us may rage." To this thy heart  
 Was much averse; still in thy husband's house  
 Thy insolence of grandeur wouldst thou hold,  
 Imperious still from thy barbaric train  
 Claim prostrate adoration: there thy pride  
 Found rich supplies; from thence didst thou come forth  
 Gorgeously vested, and the same bright sky  
 View with thy husband, O detested wretch,  
 When it became thee with thy garments rent,  
 Humble, and cowering, and thy tresses shorn,  
 To have appeared, and for thy former faults  
 To veil thy shameless pride with modesty.  
 But, Menelaus, that thou mayst know what end  
 My words would have, give Greece a glorious crown  
 By killing her, and this thy law confirm  
 To other women, "She who dares betray  
 Her husband, faithless to his bed, shall die."

*Chorus.* Oh, for the honour of thy ancestors,  
 And of thy house, punish thy wife. From Greece

Take this vile woman, this reproach, away ·  
And show thy gen'rous spirit to thy foes.

*Mene.* In this thy sentiment accords with mine,  
That willingly she left my house, and sought  
A foreign bed ; and, to set off her plea,  
Is Venus introduced. Go, where with stones  
Thou shalt be crushed : and in one hour repay  
The Grecians for their tedious toils, by death,  
That thou mayst learn ne'er to disgrace me more.

*Helena.* Low at thy knees a suppliant I beg thee,  
To me impute not what the gods have done  
Amiss. Ah, do not kill me ; pardon me !

*Hecuba.* Thy brave associates in this wasteful war,  
Whom she hath slain, I beg thee for their sake,  
And for my children's, do not thou betray.

*Mene.* Forbear, age-honoured lady ; for of her  
I have no heed. You, who attend me, hence  
To the bark bear her : she shall sail for Greece.

*Hecuba.* Let her not enter the same bark with thee.

*Mene.* Why ? Is the freight more heavy than before ?

*Hecuba.* He is no lover, who not always loves.

*Mene.* That every thought of love may be discharged,  
Thy will shall be complied with : the same bark  
With me she shall not enter : not amiss  
Is thy monition. When she comes to Greece,  
For her vile deeds as vilely shall she die,  
And teach all other women to be chaste,  
No easy lesson : yet her death with fear  
Shall strike their folly, be they worse than she.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

So, to the Grecian arms a prey,  
The temple Ilium's height that crowned,  
The altar breathing odours round,  
O Jove, dost thou betray  
The flames of holy sacrifice,  
The clouds of incense wreathing to the skies.  
The towers of Pergamus that rose  
A sacred rampire 'gainst the foes,



## Euripides

The darksome, ivy-vested woods,  
 The woods that wave on Ida's brow,  
 Down whose steep sides the cool translucent floods  
     In mazy channels flow,  
 The height, which first the sun's bright ray  
 Impurples with the orient beams of day.

*Antistrophe 1.*

Ah, banished is each solemn rite;  
 The sacred choirs with tuneful song,  
 Echoing thy hollow rocks among,  
     No more shall charm the night:  
 No more thy summits shall behold  
 The forms of gods that breathe in sculptured gold:  
 On thee the full-orbed moon no more  
 Shall Phrygia's hallowed sports restore.  
 O king, in yon ethereal skies  
 High-throned who holdst thy sov'reign state,  
 Will in thy soul no gentle pity rise,  
     For Troy's unhappy fate,  
 Sunk to the dust her towered head  
 As wide the raging flames their ravage spread?

*Strophe 2.*

Dear to my soul, my wedded lord,  
 Fall'n, fall'n beneath the slaught'ring sword,  
 Nor cleansing bath, nor decent tomb  
 Was thine, but in the Stygian gloom  
 Wanders thy melancholy ghost.  
 But me the bark that ploughs the main,  
 Winged with her swelling sails, shall bear  
 To Argos famed for steeds that whirl the car:  
 Where by the lab'ring Cyclops rise  
 The rampired walls that brave the skies.  
 My children, now a friendless train,  
 Wailing with sighs and tears their fate,  
 Call on their mother in the gate:  
 Their mother from their eyes the Grecian host  
 In the black vessel bear away,  
 And dash with oars the foaming sea;  
 To sacred Salamis they sweep,  
 Or where the Isthmus o'er the deep

Stretches its head, and views with pride  
 An ocean rolling 'gainst each side ;  
 Where Pelops in the rocky strait  
 Fixed in old times his royal seat.

*Antistrophe 2.*

On the detested bark, the waves  
 In the wide ocean when she braves  
 May the loud thunder's deep'ning roar  
 Fierce its tempestuous fury pour ;  
 And, kindled by Idæan Jove,  
 The forked light'ning's bick'ring flame,  
 In haughty triumph as she rides,  
 Fall on her deck, and pierce her rifted sides :  
 For me from Ilium, bathed in tears,  
 From my loved country far she bears  
 A slave to some proud Grecian dame.  
 Reflecting Helen's winning grace  
 The golden mirror there hath place,  
 At which the virgins joy their charms t' improve.  
 Ne'er may she reach the Spartan shore,  
 Her household gods ne'er visit more,  
 Through Pitane ne'er proudly pass,  
 Nor through Minerva's gates of brass ;  
 For Greece, through all its wide domains,  
 With shame her fatal marriage stains ;  
 And gives through scenes of bitterest woe  
 The streams of Simois to flow.

Alas ! In quick succession o'er this land  
 Ills roll on ills. Behold, ye Trojan dames  
 Oppressed with woes, the dead Astyanax,  
 Thrown by the ruthless Grecians from the towers.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Talthy.* One vessel, royal Hecuba, yet waits  
 To plough the deep, the treasures that remain,  
 Selected for Achilles' son, to bear  
 To Phthia's shore : the youthful chief is gone,  
 Informed of some calamities, which late  
 Have fall'n on Peleus, that Acastus, son  
 Of Pelias, hath driven him from his realms :  
 On this with quicker speed, than if the time

Allowed delay, he sailed, and with him bore  
 Andromache, who from mine eyes wrung tears  
 At her departure, for her country such  
 Her mournful sighs, and such at Hector's tomb  
 Her invocations : earnest her request  
 To thee, that her dead child, who from the tower  
 Fell and expired, thou in the earth wouldst lay,  
 Thy Hector's son ; and this brass-plated shield,  
 The terror of the Grecians, which his father  
 Before his breast once raised ; that to the house  
 Of Peleus, nay to the same chamber, where  
 Andromache, the mother of this child,  
 Must mount the nuptial bed, she may not bear it,  
 To sorrow at its sight : but for the chest  
 Of cedar, for the marble tomb, in this  
 That thou wouldst bury him ; conjuring me  
 To give him to thy arms, that with what robes  
 And crowns thy present fortune yields thee means,  
 Thou her dead son wouldst grace, since she is gone,  
 And her lord's haste allowed her not to give  
 Her dear child to the tomb. When thou hast dressed  
 The body with what ornaments thou mayst,  
 The earth will we heap on him ; then we sail.  
 With thy best speed what is enjoined thee do :  
 From one toil I have freed thee ; passing o'er  
 Scamander's stream the body I have bathed,  
 And washed its wounds : but now I go to sink  
 Deep in the earth his place of sepulture,  
 That with more speed, with what thou hast in charge  
 My toil concurring, we may sail for Greece.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Hecuba.* Place the orb'd shield of Hector on the ground,  
 A mournful sight, nor pleasing to mine eyes.  
 Why, O ye Grecians, who in arms excel  
 More than in gen'rous minds, why have you wrought,  
 Fearing this child, a slaughter to this hour  
 Unheard of? Was it lest the time might come  
 When he might raise fall'n Troy? There was no  
 cause :  
 E'en when my Hector shone in prosperous arms,  
 And thousands with him shook the purple spear,

We perished : since the vanquished city sunk  
Your prey, and in the war the Phrygian force  
Was wasted, such an infant could you fear?  
The fear, which reason disavows, I blame.  
O thou most dear, how hapless was thy death?  
Hadst thou in manhood's prime, the nuptial bed  
Possessed, and high, imperial, godlike power,  
Died for thy country, happy hadst thou been,  
If aught of these be happy ; now, my child,  
These to thine eyes presented and thy thought,  
Thou didst not taste, nor aught of what thy house  
Contained enjoy. Ah me, how wretchedly  
Thy father's walls, the towers by Phœbus raised,  
Have rent the crisped ringlets from thy head,  
Which thy fond mother cherished, nor withheld  
The frequent kiss ! But now, the bones all crushed,  
The slaughter riots, to abstain from words  
Of harsher utterance. Ah, these hands, whose joints  
Once the dear image of thy father's bore,  
Now lie with loosened nerves ! O thou dear mouth,  
Which utteredst many a spritely pleasantry,  
How art thou mangled ? Where thy promise now  
Which once thou madst me, hanging on my robes ?  
"O mother, didst thou say, these clust'ring locks  
Will I for thee cut off, and to thy tomb  
With my companions bear them, hailing thee  
With dear address." Such honours now to me  
Thou dost not pay ; but thee, unhappy child,  
Dead in thy early bloom, must I inter,  
Old, of my country, of my children reft.  
Ah me, are all my fond embraces, all  
My nursing pains to lull thy infancy  
To sleep, thus lost ? And on thy tomb what verse,  
Thy death declaring, shall the bard inscribe ?  
"This child the Grecians, for they feared him slew ;"  
A verse recording the disgrace of Greece.  
But of thy father's wealth though reft, his shield  
Shall yet be thine, and on its plated brass  
Thou shalt be laid in th' earth. O thou, the fence  
Of Hector's nervous arm, thou hast, O shield,  
Lost thy best guardian ! Yet how sweet to trace  
The mark of his strong grasp, and on the verge

Of thy high orb the sweat, which from his brows  
 Amidst his toils oft dropt, when to his face  
 Close he applied thee! For th' unhappy dead  
 Bring what of ornament is left us now;  
 For not to splendour hath the god assigned  
 Our fortunes; but of what I have to grace thee  
 Thou shalt receive. Of mortals him I deem  
 Unwise, who, thinking that his state is blest,  
 Joys as secure: for Fortune, like a man  
 Distempered in his senses, this way now,  
 Now that way leaps, inconstant in her course.  
 No mortal knows stability of bliss.

*Chorus.* See, from the spoils of Troy their ready hands  
 Have brought thee ornaments t' inwrap the dead.

*Hecuba.* Thee, O my child, not victor with the bow  
 O'er thy compeers, nor on the spritely steed,  
 Customs held high by Phrygia's manly sons,  
 Unwearied in the chase, thy father's mother  
 Decks with these ornaments from treasures once  
 Thine own; but Helen, by the gods abhorred,  
 Hath rent them from thee, hath destroyed thy life,  
 And all thy hapless house in ruins laid.

*Chorus.* O thou hast touched, O thou hast touched my heart  
 Thou, who wast once my city's mighty king!

*Hecuba.* Around thy limbs I wrap these gorgeous vests  
 Of Phrygian texture, which thou shouldst have worn  
 To grace thy nuptials with some noble bride  
 Surpassing all the Asiatic dames.

And thou, with conquests glorious, mother once  
 Of num'rous trophies, be thou crowned, loved shield  
 Of Hector: for, not dying, with the dead  
 Shalt thou be laid: with honours to be graced,  
 Thee worthier than the arms of my new lord,  
 The wise and base Ulysses, I esteem.

*Chorus.* Ah bitter lamentation! Thee, O child,  
 Thee shall the Earth receive: thou, mother, raise  
 The cry that wails the dead.

*Hecuba.* My heart is rent.

*Chorus.* My heart too for thy dreadful ills is rent.

*Hecuba.* Thy wounds with hands medicinal—ah me,  
 Vain service!—will I bind. Among the dead  
 All that remains shall be thy father's care.

*Chorus.* Strike, strike thy head ; loud let thy hands resound.  
Ah me !

*Hecuba.* Ye females dearest to my soul !

*Chorus.* Give utterance, royal lady, to thy griefs.

*Hecuba.* The gods intended nothing, but my woes,  
And hate to Troy, most ruthless hate. In vain  
The victims at their altars then we slew.  
Yet from the heights above had not their power  
Encompassed us, and low beneath the earth  
Sunk us in ruin, by the Muse's voice  
We had not been recorded, nor the bards  
To latest ages given the lofty verse.  
Go, in the tomb lay the unhappy dead ;  
For, as becomes the shades below, with crowns  
He is adorned : but little it imports  
The dead, I think, if any shall obtain  
Magnificent and costly obsequies :  
Vain affectation of the living this.

*Chorus.* Ah the unhappy mother, in thy life  
Who wove her brightest hopes ! Though highly  
blest,  
As from illustrious parents thy rich stream  
Of blood deriving, dreadful was thy death.  
*Hecuba.* Alas, alas ! Whom see I on the heights  
Of Ilium, blazing torches in their hands  
Waving ? Some fresh misfortune threatens Troy.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

*Talthy.* Ye leaders of the bands, who have in charge  
To burn the town of Priam, from my voice  
Hear your instructions : idle in your hands  
No longer hold the flames, but hurl them, spread  
The wasting blaze, that, Ilium low in dust  
O'eturned, we may with joy return to Greece.  
And you (for now to you my speech is turned),  
Ye Trojan dames, soon as the chiefs shall give  
The trumpet's sounding voice, go to the ships  
Of Greece, that from this country you may sail.  
And thou, unhappy lady worn with age,  
Follow : for from Ulysses these are come,  
To whom thy fortune sends thee hence a slave.

*Hecuba.* O miserable me ! This is the last,

This is the extreme bound of all my ills.  
 I from my country go ; my city sinks  
 In flames. But haste, my aged foot, though weak,  
 That I may yet salute the wretched town :  
 O Troy, that once 'mongst the barbaric states  
 Stoodst high aspiring, thy illustrious name  
 Soon shalt thou lose, for thee the raging flames  
 Consume : and from our country us they lead,  
 Now lead us slaves. Ye gods ! But why invoke  
 The gods ? Invoked before they did not hear.  
 But bear me, let me rush into the flames :  
 For this would be the greatest glory to me,  
 With thee my burning country now to die.

*Talthy.* Unhappy, thou art frenetic with thine ills.  
 Lead her, nay force her hence : for to his hand,  
 Charged by Ulysses, I must give his prize.

*Hecuba.* Woe, woe, woe, woe, intolerable woe !  
 O Jove, O sov'reign lord of Phrygia's realms,  
 Almighty sire, seest thou our miseries,  
 Unworthy of the race of Dardanus ?

*Chorus.* He sees, yet this magnificent city, now  
 No city, is destroyed. Troy is no more.

*Hecuba.* O sight of horror ! Ilium blazes ; high  
 O'er Pergamus the fiery deluge rolls,  
 Rolls o'er the city, and its tow'rd red walls.

*Chorus.* The glories of my country, e'en as smoke  
 Which on light wings is borne aloft in air,  
 By war are wasted ; all her blazing domes  
 Are sunk beneath the flames and hostile spear.

*Hecuba.* O my dear country, fost'ring land, who gavst  
 My children nurture !

*Chorus.* O unhappy land !

*Hecuba.* Hear, O my children, know your mother's voice !

*Chorus.* With mournful voice dost thou address the dead ;  
 And throwing on the ground thy aged limbs  
 Dig with thy hands the earth. Behold, I bend  
 My knee with thine, and grov'ling on the ground  
 Call our unhappy husbands laid beneath.

*Hecuba.* Ah, we are borne, are dragged,

*Chorus.*

*Hecuba.* Dragged to the house of slavery.

*Chorus.*

O mournful voice !  
 From my country

*Hecuba.* O Priam, Priam, thou indeed art fall'n,  
 Thou hast no tomb, no friend ; but of my woes  
 Thou knowst not ; for black death hath closed thine  
 eyes ;

By impious slaughter is the pious fall'n !

*Chorus.* Ye temples of the gods, and thou, loved town,  
 Destruction from the flames and pointed spear  
 Is on you ; low on earth you soon will lie,  
 Your glories vanished ; for the dust, like smoke  
 On light wings mounting high, will leave my house  
 An undistinguished ruin ; e'en thy name,  
 My country, shall be lost. In different forms  
 Destruction comes on all. Troy is no more.

*Hecuba.* Heard you that dreadful crash ? It was the fall  
 Of Pergamus. The city rocks—it rocks,  
 And crushed beneath the rolling ruin sinks.  
 My limbs, my trembling limbs, hence, bear me hence.

*Talthy.* Go to the wretched day of servile life.  
 Alas, unhappy city ! But from hence  
 Go, to the Grecian ships advance thy steps.



# HELEN

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

HELEN.

TEUCER.

CHORUS OF GRECIAN DAMES  
(HELEN'S ATTENDANTS).

MENELAUS.

FEMALE SERVANT.

MESSANGER.

THEOCLYMENUS.

THEONOE.

CASTOR AND POLLUX.

*Scene.*—PROTEUS' TOMB, AT THE ENTRANCE OF THEOCLYMENUS' PALACE IN PHAROS, AN ISLAND AT THE MOUTH OF THE NILE

HELEN.

BRIGHT are these virgin currents of the Nile  
Which water Egypt's soil, and are supplied,  
Instead of drops from heaven, by molten snow.  
But Proteus, while he lived, of these domains  
Was lord, he in the isle of Pharos dwelt,  
King of all Ægypt; for his wife he gained  
One of the nymphs who haunt the briny deep,  
Fair Psamathe, after she left the bed  
Of Æacus; she in the palace bore  
To him two children, one of them a son  
Called Theoclymenus, because his life  
Is passed in duteous homage to the gods;  
A daughter also of majestic mien,  
Her mother's darling, in her infant years  
(Eidothea called by her enraptured sire):  
But when the blooming maid became mature  
For nuptial joys, Theonoe was the name  
They gave her; all the counsels of the gods,  
The present and the future, well she knew,  
Such privilege she from her grandsire Nereus  
Inherited. But not to fame unknown  
Are Sparta's realm, whence I derive my birth,  
And my sire, Tyndarus. There prevails a rumour  
That to my mother Leda Jove was borne  
On rapid wings, the figure of a swan

Assuming, and by treachery gained admission  
To her embraces, flying from an eagle,  
If we may credit such report. My name  
Is Helen ; but I also will recount  
What woes I have endured ; three goddesses,  
For beauty's prize contending, in the cave  
Of Ida, came to Paris ; Juno, Venus,  
And Pallas, virgin progeny of Jove,  
Requesting him to end their strife, and judge  
Whose charms outshone her rivals. But proposing  
For a reward, my beauty (if the name  
Of beauty suit this inauspicious form)  
And promising in marriage to bestow me  
On Paris, Venus conquered : for the swain  
Of Ida, leaving all his herds behind,  
Expecting to receive me for his bride,  
To Sparta came. But Juno, whose defeat  
Fired with resentment her indignant soul,  
Our nuptials frustrated ; for to the arms  
Of royal Priam's son, she gave not me,  
But in my semblance formed a living image  
Composed of ether. Paris falsely deemed  
That he possessed me ; from that time these ills  
Have been increased by the decrees of Jove,  
For he with war hath visited the realms  
Of Greece, and Phrygia's miserable sons,  
That he might lighten from th' unrighteous swarms  
Of its inhabitants the groaning earth,  
And on the bravest of the Grecian chiefs  
Confer renown. While in the Phrygian war,  
As the reward of their victorious arms,  
I to the host of Greece have been displayed,  
Though absent, save in likeness and in name.  
But Mercury, receiving me in folds  
Of air, and covering with a cloud (for Jove  
Was not unmindful of me), in this house  
Of royal Proteus, who of all mankind  
Was in his judgment the most virtuous, placed me,  
That undefiled I might preserve the bed  
Of Menelaus. I indeed am here ;  
But with collected troops my hapless lord  
Pursues the ravisher to Ilion's towers.

Beside Scamander's stream hath many a chief  
 Died in my cause; but I, who have endured  
 All these afflictions, am a public curse;  
 For 'tis supposed, that treacherous to my lord,  
 I have through Greece blown up the flames of war.  
 Why then do I prolong my life? these words  
 I heard from Mercury: "That I again  
 In Sparta, with my husband shall reside,  
 When he discovers that I never went  
 To Troy:" he therefore counselled me to keep  
 A spotless chastity. While Proteus viewed  
 The solar beams, I from the nuptial yoke  
 Still lived exempt; but since the darksome grave  
 Hath covered his remains, the royal son  
 Of the deceased solicits me to wed him:  
 But honouring my first husband, at this tomb  
 Of Proteus, I a suppliant kneel, to him,  
 To him I sue, to guard my nuptial couch,  
 That if through Greece I bear a name assailed  
 By foul aspersions, no unseemly deed  
 May cover me with real infamy.

TEUCER, HELEN.

*Teucer.* Who rules this fortress? such a splendid dome  
 With royal porticos and blazoned roofs  
 Seems worthy of a Plutus for its lord.  
 But, O ye gods, what vision! I behold  
 That hateful woman who hath ruined me,  
 And all the Greeks. Heaven's vengeance on thy head!  
 Such a resemblance bear'st thou to that Helen,  
 That if I were not in a foreign land,  
 I with this stone would smite thee: thou shouldst bleed  
 For being like Jove's daughter.

*Helen.* Wretched man,  
 Whoe'er you are, why do you hate me thus  
 Because of her misfortunes?

*Teucer.* I have erred  
 In giving way to such unseemly rage.  
 All Greece abhors Jove's daughter. But forgive me  
 O woman, for the words which I have uttered.

*Helen.* Say who you are, and from what land you come?

*Teucer.* One of that miserable race the Greeks.

*Helen.* No wonder is it then, if you detest  
The Spartan Helen. But to me declare,  
Who are you, whence, and from what father sprung?

*Teucer.* My name is Teucer, Telamon my sire;  
The land which nurtured me is Salamis.

*Helen.* But wherefore do you wander o'er these meads  
Laved by the Nile?

*Teucer.* I from my native land  
Am banished.

*Helen.* You, alas! must needs be wretched.  
Who drove you thence?

*Teucer.* My father Telamon.  
What friend canst thou hold dearer?

*Helen.* For what cause  
Were you to exile doomed? your situation  
Is most calamitous.

*Teucer.* My brother Ajax,  
Who died at Troy, was author of my ruin.

*Helen.* How? by your sword deprived of life?

*Teucer.* He fell,  
On his own blade, and perished.

*Helen.* Was he mad?  
Who could act thus whose intellects are sound?

*Teucer.* Know'st thou Achilles, Peleus' son?

*Helen.* He erst,  
I heard, to Helen as a suitor came.

*Teucer.* He, at his death, his comrades left to strive  
Which should obtain his arms.

*Helen.* But why was this  
Hurtful to Ajax?

*Teucer.* When another won  
Those arms, he gave up life.

*Helen.* Do your afflictions  
Rise from his fate?

*Teucer.* Because I died not with him.

*Helen.* O stranger, went you then to Troy's famed city?

*Teucer.* And having shared in laying waste its bulwarks,  
I also perished.

*Helen.* Have the flames consumed,  
And utterly destroyed them?

*Teucer.* Not a trace  
Of those proud walls is now to be discerned.

- Helen.* Through thee, O Helen, do the Phrygians perish.  
*Teucer.* The Greeks too : for most grievous are the mischiefs  
 Which have been wrought.  
*Helen.* What length of time's elapsed  
 Since Troy was sacked?  
*Teucer.* Seven times the fruitful year  
 Hath almost turned around her lingering wheel.  
*Helen.* But how much longer did your host remain  
 Before those bulwarks ?  
*Teucer.* Many a tedious moon ;  
 There full ten years were spent.  
*Helen.* And have ye taken  
 That Spartan dame ?  
*Teucer.* By her dishevelled hair,  
 Th' adult'ress, Menelaus dragged away.  
*Helen.* Did you behold that object of distress,  
 Or speak you from report ?  
*Teucer.* These eyes as clearly  
 Witnessed the whole, as I now view thy face.  
*Helen.* Be cautious, lest for her ye should mistake  
 Some well-formed semblance which the gods have  
 sent.  
*Teucer.* Talk if thou wilt on any other subject ;  
 No more of her.  
*Helen.* Believe you this opinion  
 To be well-grounded ?  
*Teucer.* With these eyes I saw her,  
 And she e'en now is present to my soul.  
*Helen.* Have Menelaus and his consort reached  
 Their home.  
*Teucer.* They are not in the Argive land,  
 Nor on Eurotas' banks.  
*Helen.* Alas ! alas !  
 The tale you have recounted, is to her  
 Who hears you, an event most inauspicious.  
*Teucer.* He and his consort, both they say are dead.  
*Helen.* Did not the Greeks in one large squadron sail ?  
*Teucer.* Yes ; but a storm dispersed their shattered fleet.  
*Helen.* Where were they, in what seas ?  
*Teucer.* They at that time  
 Through the mid waves of the Ægean deep  
 Were passing.

*Helen.* Can none tell if Menelaus  
Escaped this tempest?

*Teucer.* No man; but through Greece  
'Tis rumoured he is dead.

*Helen.* I am undone.  
Is Thestius' daughter living?

*Teucer.* Mean'st thou Leda?  
She with the dead is numbered.

*Helen.* Did the shame  
Of Helen cause her wretched mother's death?

*Teucer.* Around her neck, 'tis said the noble dame  
Entwined the gliding noose.

*Helen.* But live the sons  
Of Tyndarus, or are they too now no more?

*Teucer.* They are, and are not, dead; for two accounts  
Are propagated.

*Helen.* Which is best confirmed?  
O wretched me!

*Teucer.* Some say that they are gods  
Under the semblance of two radiant stars.

*Helen.* Well have you spoken. But what else is rumoured?

*Teucer.* That on account of their lost sister's guilt  
They died by their own swords. But of these  
themes

Enough: I wish not to renew my sorrows.  
But O assist me in the great affairs  
On which I to these royal mansions came,  
Wishing to see the prophetess Theonoe,  
And learn, from Heaven's oracular response,  
How I may steer my vessel with success  
To Cyprus' isle, where Phœbus hath foretold  
That I shall dwell, and on the walls I rear  
Bestow the name of Salamis, yet mindful  
Of that dear country I have left behind.

*Helen.* This will your voyage of itself explain:  
But fly from these inhospitable shores,  
Ere Proteus' son, the ruler of this land,  
Behold you: fly, for he is absent now  
Pursuing with his hounds the savage prey.  
He slays each Grecian stranger who becomes  
His captive: ask not why, for I am silent;  
And what could it avail you to be told?

*Teucer.* O woman, most discreetly hast thou spoken;  
 Thy kindness may the righteous gods repay!  
 For though thy person so resemble Helen,  
 Thou hast a soul unlike that worthless dame.  
 Perdition seize her; never may she reach  
 The current of Eurotas: but mayst thou,  
 Most generous woman, be for ever blest.

[*Exit TEUCER.*]

*Helen.* Plunged as I am 'midst great and piteous woes,  
 How shall I frame the plaintive strain, what  
     Muse  
 With tears, or doleful elegies, invoke?

ODE.

I. 1.

Ye syrens, winged daughters of the earth,  
 Come and attune the sympathetic string,  
     Expressive now no more of mirth,  
 To soothe my griefs, the flute of Libya bring;  
 Record the tortures which this bosom rend,  
 And echo back my elegiac strains:  
 Proserpine next will I invoke, to send  
 Numbers adapted to her votary's pains;  
 So shall her dark abode, while many a tear I shed,  
 Waft the full dirge to soothe th' illustrious dead.

CHORUS, HELEN.

CHORUS.

I. 2.

Near the cerulean margin of our streams  
 I stood, and on the tufted herbage spread  
     My purple vestments in those beams  
 Which from his noontide orb Hyperion shed,  
 When on a sudden from the waving reeds  
 I heard a plaintive and unwelcome sound  
 Of bitter lamentation; o'er the meads  
 Groans inarticulate were poured around:  
 Beneath the rocky cave, dear scene of past delight,  
 Some Naiad thus bewails Pan's hasty flight.

## HELEN.

## II. 1.

Ye Grecian nymphs, whom those barbarians caught,  
And from your native land reluctant bore,  
The tidings which yon sailor brought  
Call forth these tears; for Ilion is no more,  
By him of Ida, that predicted flame  
Destroyed; through me, alas! have myriads bled,  
If not through me, through my detested name.  
By th' ignominious noose is Leda dead  
Who my imaginary guilt deplored;  
And doomed by the relentless Fates in vain  
To tedious wanderings, my unhappy lord  
At length hath perished 'midst the billowy main:  
The twin protectors of their native land,  
Castor and Pollux, from all human eyes  
Are vanished, they have left Eurotas' strand,  
And fields, in playful strife where each young wrestler  
vies.

## CHORUS.

## II. 2.

My royal mistress, your disastrous fate  
With many a groan and fruitless tear I mourn.  
I from that hour your sorrows date  
When amorous Jove on snowy pinions borne,  
In form a swan, by Leda was carest.  
Is there an evil you have not endured?  
Your mother is no more, through you unblest  
Are Jove's twin sons. Nor have your vows procured  
Of your dear country the enchanting sight.  
A rumour too through various realms hath spread,  
Caught by the envious vulgar with delight,  
Assigning you to the barbarian's bed.  
Amid the waves, far from the wished-for shore,  
Your husband hath been buried in the main.  
You shall behold your native walls no more  
Nor under burnished roofs your wonted state maintain.



HELEN.

III.

What Phrygian artist on the top of Ide,  
 Or vagrant of a Grecian line,  
 Felled that inauspicious pine,  
 To frame the bark which Paris o'er the tide  
 Dared with barbaric oars to guide,  
 When to my palace, in an evil hour  
 Caught by beauty's magic power,  
 He came to seize me for his bride?  
 But crafty Venus, authoress of these broils,  
 Marched thither, leagued with death, t' annoy  
 Triumphant Greece and vanquished Troy,  
 (Wretch that I am, consumed with endless toils!)  
 And Juno seated on her golden throne,  
 Consort of thundering Jove,  
 Sent Hermes from the realms above,  
 Who found me, when I carelessly had strewn  
 Leaves plucked from roses in my vest,  
 As Minerva's votary drest;  
 He bore me through the paths of air  
 To this loathed, this dreary land,  
 Called Greece, and Priam's friends the strife to share,  
 And roused to bloody deeds each rival band;  
 Where Simois' current glides, my name  
 Hence is marked with groundless shame.  
*Chorus.* Your woes I know are grievous: but to bear  
 With tranquil mind the necessary ills  
 Of life, is most expedient.

*Helen.*

To what ills

Have I been subject, O my dear companions!  
 Did not my mother, as a prodigy  
 Which wondering mortals gaze at, bring me forth?  
 For neither Grecian nor barbaric dame  
 Till then produced an egg, in which her children  
 Enveloped lay, as they report, from Jove  
 Leda engendered. My whole life and all  
 That hath befallen me, but conspires to form  
 One series of miraculous events;  
 To Juno some, and to my beauty some,  
 Are owing. Would to Heaven, that, like a tablet

Whose picture is effaced, I could exchange  
This form for one less comely, since the Greeks  
Forgetting those abundant gifts showered down  
By prosperous Fortune which I now possess,  
Think but of what redounds not to my honour,  
And still remember my ideal shame.  
Whoever therefore, with one single species  
Of misery is afflicted by the gods,  
Although the weight of Heaven's chastising hand  
Be grievous, may with fortitude endure  
Such visitation : but by many woes  
Am I oppressed, and first of all exposed  
To slanderous tongues, although I ne'er have erred.  
It were a lesser evil e'en to sin  
Then be suspected falsely. Then the gods,  
'Midst men of barbarous manners, placed me far  
From my loved country : torn from every friend,  
I languish here, to servitude consigned  
Although of free born race : for 'midst barbarians  
Are all enslaved but one, their haughty lord.  
My fortunes had this single anchor left,  
Perchance my husband might at length arrive  
To snatch me from my woes ; but he, alas !  
Is now no more, my mother too is dead,  
And I am deemed her murd'ress, though unjustly,  
Yet am I branded with this foul reproach ;  
And she who was the glory of our house,  
My daughter in the virgin state grown grey,  
Still droops unwedded : my illustrious brothers,  
Castor and Pollux, called the sons of Jove,  
Are now no more. But I impute my death,  
Crushed as I am by all these various woes,  
Not to my own misdeeds, but to the power  
Of adverse fortune only : this one danger  
There yet remains, if at my native land  
I should again arrive, they will confine me  
In a close dungeon, thinking me that Helen  
Who dwelt in Ilion, till she thence was borne  
By Menelaus. Where my husband living,  
We might have known each other, by producing  
Those tokens to which none beside are privy :  
But this will never be, nor can he e'er

Return in safety. To what purpose then  
 Do I still lengthen out this wretched being?  
 To what new fortunes am I still reserved?  
 Shall I select a husband, but to vary  
 My present ills, to dwell beneath the roof  
 Of a barbarian, at luxurious boards  
 With wealth abounding, seated? for the dame  
 Whom wedlock couples with the man she hates  
 Death is the best expedient. But with glory  
 How shall I die? the fatal noose appears  
 To be so base, that e'en in slaves 'tis held  
 Unseemly thus to perish; in the poniard  
 There's somewhat great and generous. But to me  
 Delays are useless: welcome instant death:  
 Into such depth of misery am I plunged.  
 For beauty renders other women blest,  
 But hath to me the source of ruin proved.

*Chorus.* O Helen, whosoe'er the stranger be  
 Who hither came, believe not that the whole  
 Of what he said, is truth

*Helen.* But in plain terms  
 Hath he announced my dearest husband's death.

*Chorus.* The false assertions which prevail, are many.

*Helen.* Clear is the language in which honest Truth  
 Loves to express herself.

*Chorus.* You are inclined  
 Rather to credit inauspicious tidings  
 Than those which are more favourable.

*Helen.* By fears  
 Encompassed, am I hurried to despair.

*Chorus.* What hospitable treatment have you found  
 Beneath these roofs?

*Helen.* All here, except the man  
 Who seeks to wed me, are my friends.

*Chorus.* You know  
 How then to act: leave this sepulchral gloom,

*Helen.* What are the counsels, or the cheering words  
 You wish to introduce?

*Chorus.* Go in, and question  
 The daughter of the Nereid, her who knows  
 All hidden truths, Theonoe, if your lord  
 Yet live, or view the solar beams no more:

And when you have learnt this, as suit your fortunes  
Indulge your joys, or pour forth all your tears :  
But ere you know aught fully, what avail  
Your sorrows ? therefore listen to my words ;  
Leaving this tomb, attend the maid : from her  
Shall you know all. But why should you look farther  
When truth is in these mansions to be found ?  
With you the doors I'll enter ; we together  
The royal virgin's oracles will hear.  
For 'tis a woman's duty to exert  
Her utmost efforts in a woman's cause.

*Helen.* My friends, your wholesome counsels I approve :  
But enter ye these doors, that ye, within  
The palace, my calamities may hear.

*Chorus.* You summon her who your commands obeys  
Without reluctance.

*Helen.* Woeful day ! ah me,  
What lamentable tidings shall I hear ?

*Chorus.* Forbear these plaintive strains, my dearest queen,  
Nor with presaging soul anticipate  
Evils to come.

*Helen.* What hath my wretched lord  
Endured ? Doth he yet view the light, the sun  
Borne in his radiant chariot, and the paths  
Of all the starry train ? Or hath he shared  
The common lot of mortals, is he plunged  
Among the dead, beneath th' insatiate grave ?

*Chorus.* O construe what time yet may bring to pass  
In the most favourable terms.

*Helen.* On thee  
I call to testify, and thee adjure,  
Eurotas, on whose verdant margin grow  
The waving reeds : O tell me, if my lord  
Be dead, as fame avers.

*Chorus.* Why do you utter  
These incoherent ditties ?

*Helen.* Round my neck  
The deadly noose will I entwine, or drive  
With my own hand a poniard through my breast ;  
For I was erst the cause of bloody strife ;  
But now am I a victim, to appease  
The wrath of those three goddesses who strove

On Ida's mount, when 'midst the stalls where fed  
His lowing herds, the son of Priam waked  
The sylvan reed, to celebrate my beauty.

*Chorus.* Cause these averted ills, ye gods, to light  
On other heads ; but, O my royal mistress,  
May you be happy.

*Helen.* Thou, O wretched Troy,  
To crimes which thou hast ne'er committed, ow'st  
Thy ruin, and those horrible disasters  
Thou hast endured. For as my nuptial gifts,  
Hath Venus caused an intermingled stream  
Of blood and tears to flow, she, griefs to griefs  
And tears to tears hath added ; all these sufferings  
Have been the miserable Ilion's lot.  
Of their brave sons the mothers were bereft  
The virgin sisters of the mighty dead  
Strewed their shorn tresses on Scamander's banks,  
While, by repeated shrieks, victorious Greece  
Her woes expressing, smote her laurelled head,  
And with her nails deep furrowing tore her cheeks.  
Happy Calisto, thou Arcadian nymph  
Who didst ascend the couch of Jove, transformed  
To a four-footed savage, far more blest  
Art thou than she to whom I owe my birth :  
For thou beneath the semblance of a beast,  
Thy tender limbs with shaggy hide o'erspread,  
And glaring with stern visage, by that change  
Didst end thy griefs. She too whom Dian drove  
Indignant from her choir, that hind whose horns  
Were tipped with gold, the bright Titanian maid,  
Daughter of Merops, to her beauty owed  
That transformation : but my charms have ruined  
Both Troy and the unhappy Grecian host.

[*Exeunt HELEN and CHORUS.*]

MENELAUS.

O Pelops, in the strife on Pisa's field,  
Who didst outstrip the fiery steeds that whirled  
The chariot of Oenomaus, would to Heaven  
That when thy severed limbs before the gods  
Were at the banquet placed, thou then thy life  
Amidst the blest immortal powers hadst closed,

Ere thou my father Atreus didst beget,  
Whose issue by his consort Ærope  
Were Agamemnon and myself, two chiefs  
Of high renown. No ostentatious words  
Are these ; but such a numerous host, I deem,  
As that which we to Ilion's shore conveyed,  
Ne'er stemmed the tide before ; these troops their king  
Led not by force to combat, but bore rule  
O'er Grecian youths his voluntary subjects,  
And among these, some heroes, now no more,  
May we enumerate ; others from the sea  
Who 'scaped with joy, and to their homes returned,  
E'en after fame had classed them with the dead.  
But I, most wretched, o'er the briny waves  
Of ocean wander, since I have o'erthrown  
The battlements of Troy, and though I wish  
Again to reach my country ; by the gods  
Am I esteemed unworthy of such bliss.  
E'en to the Libyan deserts have I sailed,  
And traversed each inhospitable scene  
Of brutal outrage ; still as I approach  
My country, the tempestuous winds repel me,  
Nor hath a prosperous breeze from Heaven yet filled  
My sails, to waft me to the Spartan coast :  
And now a shipwrecked, miserable man,  
Reft of my friends, I on these shores am cast,  
My vessel hath been shivered 'gainst the rocks  
Into a thousand fragments : on the keel,  
The only part which yet remains entire  
Of all that fabric, scarce could I and Helen,  
Whom I from Troy have borne, escape with life  
Through fortunes unforeseen : but of this land  
And its inhabitants, the name I know not :  
For with the crowd I blushed to intermingle  
Lest they my squalid garments should observe,  
Through shame my wants concealing. For the man  
Of an exalted station, when assailed  
By adverse fortune, having never learned  
How to endure calamity, is plunged  
Into a state far worse than he whose woes  
Have been of ancient date. But pinching need  
Torments me : for I have not either food

Or raiment to protect my shivering frame,  
 Which may be guessed from these vile rags I wear  
 Cast up from my wrecked vessel : for the sea  
 Hath swallowed up my robes, my tissued vests,  
 And every ensign of my former state.  
 Within the dark recesses of a cave  
 Having concealed my wife, that guilty cause  
 Of all my woes, and my surviving friends  
 Enjoined to guard her, hither am I come.  
 Alone, in quest of necessary aid  
 For my brave comrades whom I there have left,  
 If by my search I haply can obtain it,  
 I roam ; but when I viewed this house adorned  
 With gilded pinnacles, and gates that speak  
 The riches of their owner, I advanced :  
 For I have hopes that from this wealthy mansion  
 I, somewhat for my sailors, shall obtain.  
 But they who want the necessary comforts  
 Of life, although they are disposed to aid us,  
 Yet have not wherewithal. Ho ! who comes forth  
 From yonder gate, my doleful tale to bear  
 Into the house ?

## FEMALE SERVANT, MENELAUS.

- F. Serv.* Who at the threshold stands ?  
 Wilt thou not hence depart, lest thy appearance  
 Before these doors give umbrage to our lords ?  
 Else shalt thou surely die, because thou can'st  
 From Greece, whose sons shall never hence return.
- Mene.* Well hast thou spoken, O thou aged dame.  
 Wilt thou permit me ? For to thy behests  
 Must I submit : but suffer me to speak.
- F. Serv.* Depart : for 'tis my duty to permit  
 No Greek to enter this imperial dome.
- Mene.* Lift not thy hand against me, nor attempt  
 To drive me hence by force.
- F. Serv.* Thou wilt not yield  
 To my advice, thou therefore art to blame.
- Mene.* Carry my message to thy lords within.
- F. Serv.* I fear lest somewhat dreadful might ensue,  
 Should I repeat your words.

- Mene.* I hither come  
A shipwrecked man, a stranger, one of those  
Whom all hold sacred.
- F. Serv.* To some other house,  
Instead of this, repair.
- Mene.* I am determined  
To enter: but comply with my request.
- F. Serv.* Be well assured thou art unwelcome here,  
And shalt ere long by force be driven away.
- Mene.* Alas! alas! where are my valiant troops?
- F. Serv.* Elsewhere, perhaps, thou wert a mighty man;  
But here art thou no longer such.
- Mene.* O Fortune,  
How am I galled with undeserved reproach!
- F. Serv.* Why are those eyelids moist with tears, why  
griev'st thou?
- Mene.* Because I once was happy.
- F. Serv.* Then depart,  
And mingle social tears with those thou lov'st.
- Mene.* But what domain is this, to whom belong  
These royal mansions?
- F. Serv.* Proteus here resides;  
This land is Egypt.
- Mene.* Egypt? wretched me!  
Ah, whither have I sailed!
- F. Serv.* But for what cause  
Scorn'st thou the race of Nile?
- Mene.* I scorn them not:  
My own disastrous fortunes I bewail.
- F. Serv.* Many are wretched, thou in this respect  
Art nothing singular.
- Mene.* Is he, the king  
Thou speak'st of, here within?
- F. Serv.* To him belongs  
This tomb; his son is ruler of this land.
- Mene.* But where is he: abroad, or in the palace?
- F. Serv.* He's not within: but to the Greeks he bears  
The greatest enmity.
- Mene.* Whence rose this hate,  
Productive of such bitter fruits to me?
- F. Serv.* Beneath these roofs Jove's daughter Helen  
dwells.



*Mene.* What mean'st thou? Ha! what words with wonder  
fraught

Are these which thou hast uttered? O repeat them.

*F. Serv.* The child of Tyndarus, she who in the realm  
Of Sparta erst abode.

*Mene.* Whence came she hither?

How can this be?

*F. Serv.* From Lacedæmon's realm.

*Mene.* When? Hath my wife been torn from yonder  
cave?

*F. Serv.* Before the Greeks, O stranger, went to Troy.  
Retreat then from these mansions, for within

Hath happened a calamitous event,

By which the palace is disturbed. Thou com'st

Unseasonably, and if the king surprise thee,

Instead of hospitable treatment, death

Must be thy portion. To befriend the Greeks

Though well inclined, yet thee have I received

With these harsh words, because I fear the monarch.

[*Exit FEMALE SERVANT.*]

*Mene.* What shall I say? For I, alas! am told  
Of present sorrows added to the past.

Come I not hither, after having borne

From vanquished Troy my consort, whom I left

Within yon cave well guarded? Yet here dwells

Another Helen, whom that woman called

Jove's daughter. Lives there on the banks of Nil<sup>us</sup>

A man who bears the sacred name of Jove?

For in the heavens there's only one. What country?

But that where glides Eurotas' stream beset

With waving reeds, is Sparta? Tyndarus' name

Suits him alone. But is there any land

Synonymous with Lacedæmon's realm,

And that of Troy? I know not how to solve

This doubt; for there are many, it appears,

In various regions of the world, who bear

Like appellations; city corresponds

With city; woman borrows that of woman:

Nor must we therefore wonder. Yet again

Here will I stay, though danger be announced

By yonder aged servant at the door:

For there is no man so devoid of pity

As not to give me food, when he the name  
Of Menelaus hears. That dreadful fire  
By which the Phrygian bulwarks were consumed  
Is memorable, and I who kindled it  
Am known in every land. I'll therefore wait  
Until the master of this house return.  
But I have two expedients, and will practise  
That which my safety shall require ; of soul  
Obdurate, if he prove, in my wrecked bark  
Can I conceal myself, but if the semblance  
Which he puts on, be mild, I for relief  
From these my present miseries, will apply.  
But this of all the woes that I endure  
Is the most grievous, that from other kings  
I, though a king myself, should be reduced  
To beg my food : but thus hath Fate ordained.  
Nor is it my assertion, but a maxim  
Among the wise established, that there's nought  
More powerful than the dread behests of Fate.

HELEN, CHORUS, MENELAUS.

*Chorus.* I heard what yon prophetic maid foretold,  
Who in the palace did unfold  
The oracles ; that to the shades profound  
Of Erebus, beneath the ground  
Interred, not yet hath Menelaus ta'en  
His passage : on the stormy main  
Still tossed, he cannot yet approach the strand,  
The haven of the Spartan land :  
The chief, who now his vagrant life bewails,  
Without a friend, unfurls his sails,  
From Ilion's realm to every distant shore  
Borne o'er the deep with luckless oar.

*Helen.* I to this hallowed tomb again repair,  
Now I have heard the grateful tidings uttered  
By sage Theonoe, who distinctly knows  
All that hath happened ? for she says my lord  
Is living, and yet views the solar beams :  
But after passing o'er unnumbered straits  
Of ocean, to a vagrant's wretched life  
Full long inured, on these Ægyptian coasts,  
When he his toils hath finished, shall arrive.

Yet there is one thing more, which she hath left  
 Unmentioned, whether he shall come with safety.  
 This question I neglected to propose,  
 O'erjoyed when she informed me he yet lives;  
 She also adds, that he is near the land,  
 From his wrecked ship, with his few friends, cast  
 forth,

O mayst thou come at length; for ever dear  
 To me wilt thou arrive. Ha! who is that?  
 Am not I caught, through some deceitful scheme  
 Of Proteus' impious son, in hidden snares?  
 Like a swift courser, or the madding priestess  
 Of Bacchus, shall I not with hasty step  
 Enter the tomb, because his looks are fierce  
 Who rushes on, and strives to overtake me?  
*Mene.* On thee I call, who to the yawning trench  
 Around that tomb, and blazing altars hiest  
 Precipitate. Stay: wherefore dost thou fly?  
 With what amazement doth thy presence strike  
 And almost leave me speechless!

*Helen.* O my friends,  
 I suffer violence; for from the tomb  
 I by this man am dragged, who to the king  
 Will give me, from whose nuptial couch I fled.  
*Mene.* We are no pirates, nor the ministers  
 Of lustful villany.

*Helen.* Yet is the vest  
 You wear unseemly.

*Mene.* Stay thy rapid flight,  
 Dismiss thy fears.

*Helen.* I stop, now I have reached  
 This hallowed spot.

*Mene.* Say, woman, who thou art;  
 What face do I behold?

*Helen.* But who are you?  
 For I by the same reasons am induced  
 To ask this question.

*Mene.* Never did I see  
 A greater likeness.

*Helen.* O ye righteous gods!  
 For 'tis a privilege the gods alone  
 Confer, to recognize our long-lost friends.

- Mene.* Art thou a Grecian or a foreign dame?  
*Helen.* Of Greece: but earnestly I wish to know  
 Whence you derive your origin.  
*Mene.* In thee  
 A wonderful resemblance I discern  
 Of Helen.  
*Helen.* Menelaus' very features  
 These eyes in you behold, still at a loss  
 Am I for words t' express my thoughts.  
*Mene.* Full clearly  
 Hast thou discovered a most wretched man.  
*Helen.* O to thy consort's arms at length restored!  
*Mene.* To what a consort? O forbear to touch  
 My garment!  
*Helen.* E'en the same, whom to your arms,  
 A noble bride, my father Tyndarus gave.  
*Mene.* Send forth, O Hecate, thou orb of light,  
 Some more benignant spectre.  
*Helen.* You in me  
 Behold not one of those who minister  
 At Hecate's abhorred nocturnal rites.  
*Mene.* Nor am I sure the husband of two wives.  
*Helen.* Say, to whom else in wedlock are you joined?  
*Mene.* To her who lies concealed in yonder cave,  
 The prize I hither bring from vanquished Troy.  
*Helen.* You have no wife but me.  
*Mene.* If I retain  
 My reason yet, these eyes are sure deceived.  
*Helen.* Seem you not then, while me you thus behold,  
 To view your real consort?  
*Mene.* Though your person  
 Resemble hers, no positive decision  
 Can I presume to form.  
*Helen.* Observe me well,  
 And mark wherein we differ. Who can judge  
 With greater certainty than you?  
*Mene.* Thou bear'st  
 Her semblance, I confess.  
*Helen.* Who can inform you  
 Better than your own eyes?  
*Mene.* What makes me doubt  
 Is this; because I have another wife.

*Helen.* To the domains of Troy I never went :  
It was my image only.

*Mene.* Who can fashion  
Such bodies, with the power of sight endured ?  
*Helen.* Composed of ether, you a consort have,  
Heaven's workmanship.

*Mene.* Wrought by what plastic  
For the events thou speak'st of are most wondrous

*Helen.* Lest Paris should obtain me, this exchange  
Was made by Juno.

*Mene.* How couldst thou be here  
At the same time, and in the Phrygian realm ?

*Helen.* The name, but not the body, can be present  
At once in many places.

*Mene.* O release me ;  
For I came hither in an evil hour.

*Helen.* Will you then leave me here, and bear away  
That shadow of a wife ?

*Mene.* Yet, O farewell,  
Because thou art like Helen.

*Helen.* I'm undone :  
For though my husband I again have found,  
Yet shall not I possess him.

*Mene.* My conviction,  
From all those grievous toils I have endured  
At Ilion, I derive, and not from thee.

*Helen.* Ah, who is there more miserable than I am ?  
My dearest friends desert me : I, to Greece,  
To my dear native land, shall ne'er return.

MESSENGER, MENELAUS, HELEN, CHORUS.

*Mess.* After a tedious search, O Menelaus,  
At length have I with difficulty found you,  
But not till over all the wide extent  
Of this barbaric region I had wandered ;  
Sent by the comrades whom you left behind.

*Mene.* Have ye been plundered then by the barbarians

*Mess.* A most miraculous event hath happened,  
Yet less astonishing by far in name  
Than in reality.

*Mene.* Speak, for thou bring'st  
Important tidings by this breathless haste.

*Mess.* My words are these : in vain have you endured  
Unnumbered toils.

*Mene.* Those thou bewail'st are ills  
Of ancient date. But what hast thou to tell me ?

*Mess.* Borne to the skies your consort from our sight  
Hath vanished, in the heavens is she concealed,  
Leaving the cave in which we guarded her,  
When she these words had uttered : "O ye sons  
Of hapless Phrygia, and of Greece : for me  
Beside Scamander's conscious stream ye died,  
Through Juno's arts, because ye falsely deemed  
Helen by Phrygian Paris was possest :  
But after having here remained on earth  
My stated time, observing the decrees  
Of Fate, I to my sire the liquid ether  
Return : but Tyndarus' miserable daughter,  
Though guiltless, hath unjustly been accused."  
Daughter of Leda hail ! wert thou then here ?  
While I as if thou to the starry paths  
Hadst mounted, through my ignorance proclaimed  
Thou from this world on rapid wings wert borne.  
But I no longer will allow thee thus  
To sport with the afflictions of thy friends ;  
For in thy cause thy lord and his brave troops  
On Ilion's coast already have endured  
Abundant toils.

*Mene.* These are the very words  
She uttered ; and by what ye both aver  
The truth is ascertained. O happy day  
Which gives thee to my arms !

*Helen.* My dearest lord,  
O Menelaus, it is long indeed  
Since I have seen you : but joy comes at last.  
My friends, transported I receive my lord  
Whom I once more with these fond arms enfold,  
After the radiant chariot of the sun  
Hath oft the world illumined.

*Mene.* I embrace  
Thee too : but having now so much to say  
I know not with what subject to begin.

*Helen.* Joy raises my exulting crest, these tears  
Are tears of ecstasy, around your neck

My arms I fling with transport, O my husband,  
O sight most wished for!

*Mene.*

I acquit the Fates,  
Since Jove's and Leda's daughter I possess,  
On whom her brothers borne on milk-white steeds  
Erst showered abundant blessings, when the torch  
Was kindled at our jocund nuptial rite;  
Though from my palace her the gods conveyed.  
But evil now converted into good  
To me thy husband hath at length restored  
My long-lost consort: grant, O bounteous Heaven,  
That I these gifts of fortune may enjoy.

*Helen.*

May you enjoy them, for my vows concur  
With yours; nor, of us two, can one be wretched  
Without the other. O my friends, I groan  
No longer, I no longer shed the tear  
For my past woes: my husband I possess  
Whom I from Troy expected to return  
Full many, many years.

*Mene.*

I still am thine,  
And thee with these fond arms again enfold.  
But oft the chariot of the sun revolved  
Through his diurnal orbit, ere the frauds  
Of Juno I discerned. Yet more from joy  
Than from affliction rise the tears I shed.

*Helen.*

What shall I say? what mortal could presume  
E'er to have hoped for such a blest event?  
An unexpected visitant once more  
I clasp you to my bosom.

*Mene.*

And I thee  
Who didst appear to sail for Ida's town,  
And Ilion's wretched turrets. By the gods,  
Inform me, I conjure thee, by what means  
Thou from my palace hither wert conveyed.

*Helen.*

Alas! you to the source of all my woes  
Ascend, and search into most bitter tidings.

*Mene.*

Speak: for whate'er hath been ordained  
Heaven  
Ought to be published.

*Helen.*

I abhor the topic  
On which I now am entering.

*Mene.*

Yet relate

All that thou know'st ; for pleasing 'tis to hear  
Of labours that are past.

I never went  
To that barbarian youth's adulterous couch  
By the swift oar impelled : but winged love  
Those hapless spousals formed.

What god, what fate  
Hath torn thee from thy country ?

O my lord,  
The son of Jove hath placed me on the banks  
Of Nile.

With what amazement do I hear  
This wondrous tale of thy celestial guide !  
Oft have I wept, and still the tear bedews  
These eyes : to Juno, wife of Jove, I owe  
My ruin.

Wherefore wished she to have heaped  
Mischiefs on thee ?

Ye sources of what'e'r  
To me hath been most dreadful, O ye baths  
And fountains, where those goddesses adorned  
Their rival beauties, from whose influence rose  
That judgment !

Were those curses on thy head  
By Juno showered, that judgment to requite ?  
To rescue me from Venus.

What thou mean'st  
Inform me.

Who to Paris had engaged——  
O wretched woman !

Wretched, wretched me !  
Thus did she waft me to th' Egyptian coast.  
Then in thy stead to him that image gave,  
As thou inform'st me.

But alas ! what woes  
Thence visited our wretched house ! ah mother !  
Ah me !  
What sayst thou ?

Leda is no more.  
Around her neck she fixed the deadly noose  
On my account, through my unhappy nuptials  
O'erwhelmed with foul disgrace.



- Mene.* Alas! But lives  
Hermione our daughter?
- Helen.* Yet unwedded,  
Yet childless, O my husband, she bewails  
My miserable 'spousals, my disgrace.
- Mene.* O Paris, who hast utterly o'erthrown  
All my devoted house, these curst events,  
Both thee, and myriads of the Grecian troops  
With brazen arms refulgent, have destroyed,
- Helen.* But from my country in an evil hour,  
From my loved native city, and from you,  
Me hath the goddess driven, a wretch accursed  
In that I left our home, and bridal bed,  
Which yet I left not, for those base espousals.
- Chorus.* If ye hereafter meet with happier fortune,  
This may atone for all ye have endured  
Already.
- Mess.* To me too, O Menelaus,  
Communicate a portion of that joy  
Which I perceive, but know not whence it springs
- Mene.* Thou too, old man, shalt in our conference share.
- Mess.* Was not she then the cause of all the woes  
Endured at Troy?
- Mene.* Not she: we were deceived  
By those immortal Powers, whose plastic hand  
Moulded a cloud into that baleful image.
- Mess.* What words are these you utter? have we toiled  
In vain, and only for an empty cloud?
- Mene.* These deeds were wrought by Juno, and the strife  
'Twixt the three goddesses.
- Mess.* But is this woman  
Indeed your wife?
- Mene.* E'en she: and thou for this  
On my assertion safely mayst depend.
- Mess.* My daughter, O how variable is Jove,  
And how inscrutable! for he with ease  
Whirls us around, now here, now there; one suffer  
Full many toils; another, who ne'er knew  
What sorrow was, is swallowed up at once  
In swift perdition, nor in Fortune's gifts  
A firm and lasting tenure doth enjoy.  
Thou and thy husband have endured a war,

Of slander thou, but he of pointed spears :  
For by the tedious labours he endured  
He nothing could obtain, but now obtains  
The greatest and the happiest of all boons,  
Which comes to him unsought. Thou hast not shamed  
Thy aged father, and the sons of Jove,  
Nor acted as malignant rumour speaks.

I now renew thy hymeneal rite,  
And still am mindful of the torch I bore,  
Running before the steeds, when in a car  
Thou with this favoured bridegroom wert conveyed  
From thy paternal mansion's happy gates.  
For worthless is that servant who neglects  
His master's interests, nor partakes their joys,  
Nor feels for their afflictions. I was born  
Indeed a slave, yet I with generous slaves  
Would still be numbered, for although the name  
I bear is abject, yet my soul is free.  
Far better this, than if I had at once  
Suffered two evils, a corrupted heart,  
And vile subjection to another's will.

*enc.* Courage, old man : for thou hast borne my shield,  
And in my cause endured unnumbered toils,  
Sharing my dangers : now partake my joys ;  
Go tell the friends I left, what thou hast seen,  
And our auspicious fortunes : on the shore  
Bid them remain, till our expected conflict  
Is finished ; and observe how we may sail  
From this loathed coast ; that, with our better fortune  
Conspiring, we, if possible, may 'scape  
From these barbarians.

*ess.* Your commands, O king,  
Shall be obeyed. But I perceive how vain  
And how replete with falsehood is the voice  
Of prophets : no dependence can be placed  
Upon the flames that from the altar rise,  
Or on the voices of the feathered choir.  
It is the height of folly to suppose  
That birds are able to instruct mankind.  
For Calchas, to the host, nor by his words  
Nor signs, declared, " I for a cloud behold  
My friends in battle slain." The seer was mute,

And Troy in vain was taken. But perhaps  
 You will rejoin, "'Twas not the will of Heaven  
 That he should speak." Why then do we consult  
 These prophets? We by sacrifice should ask  
 For blessings from the gods, and lay aside  
 All auguries. This vain delusive bait  
 Was but invented to beguile mankind.  
 No sluggard e'er grew rich by divination,  
 The best of seers are Prudence and Discernment.

[*Exit* MESSENGER.]

*Chorus.* My sentiments on prophets well accord  
 With those of this old man. He whom the gods  
 Th' immortal gods befriend, in his own house  
 Hath a response that never can mislead.

*Helen.* So be it. All thus far is well. But how  
 You came with safety, O unhappy man,  
 From Troy, 'twill nought avail for me to know;  
 Yet with the sorrows of their friends, have friends  
 A wish to be acquainted.

*Mene.* Thou hast asked  
 A multitude of questions in one short  
 And blended sentence. Why should I recount  
 To thee our sufferings on the Ægean deep,  
 Those treacherous beacons, by the vengeful hand  
 Of Nauplius kindled on Eubœa's rocks,  
 The towns of Crete, or in the Libyan realm,  
 Which I have visited, and the famed heights  
 Of Perseus? never could my words assuage  
 Thy curiosity, and, by repeating  
 My woes to thee, I should but grieve the more,  
 And yet a second time those sufferings feel.

*Helen.* You in your answer have been more discreet  
 Than I who such a question did propose.  
 But pass o'er all beside, and only tell me  
 How long you wandered o'er the briny main.

*Mene.* Year after year, besides the ten at Troy,  
 Seven tedious revolutions of the sun.

*Helen.* The time you speak of, O unhappy man,  
 Is long indeed: but from those dangers saved  
 You hither come to bleed.

*Mene.* What words are these?  
 What dost thou mean? O, how hast thou undone me!

- Helen.* Fly from these regions with your utmost speed :  
Or he to whom this house belongs will slay you.
- Mene.* What have I done that merits such a fate?
- Helen.* You hither come an unexpected guest,  
And are a hindrance to my bridal rite.
- Mene.* Is there a man then who presumes to wed  
My consort ?
- Helen.* And with arrogance to treat me,  
Which I, alas ! have hitherto endured.
- Mene.* Of private rank, in his own strength alone  
Doth he confide, or rules he o'er the land ?
- Helen.* Lord of this region, royal Proteus' son.
- Mene.* This is the very riddle which I heard  
From yonder female servant.
- Helen.* At which gate  
Of this barbarian palace did you stand ?
- Mene.* Here, whence I like a beggar was repelled.
- Helen.* What, did you beg for food ! ah wretched me !
- Mene.* The fact was thus : though I that abject name  
Assumed not.
- Helen.* You then know, it seems, the whole  
About my nuptials.
- Mene.* This I know : but whether  
Thou has escaped th' embraces of the king  
I still am uninformed.
- Helen.* That I have kept  
Your bed still spotless, may you rest assured.
- Mene.* How canst thou prove the fact ? if thou speak  
truth  
To me, it will give pleasure.
- Helen.* Do you see,  
Close to the tomb, my miserable seat ?
- Mene.* I on the ground behold a couch : but what  
Hast thou to do with that, O wretched woman ?
- Helen.* Here I a suppliant bowed, that I might 'scape  
From those espousals.
- Mene.* Couldst thou find no altar,  
Or dost thou follow the barbarian mode ?
- Helen.* Equally with the temples of the gods  
Will this protect me.
- Mene.* Is not then my bark  
Allowed to waft thee to the Spartan shore ?

*Helen.* Rather the sword than Helen's bridal bed  
Awaits you.

*Mene.* Thus should I of all mankind  
Be the most wretched.

*Helen.* Let not shame prevent  
Your 'scaping from this land.

*Mene.* And leaving thee,  
For whom I laid the walls of Ilion waste?

*Helen.* 'Twere better than to perish in the cause  
Of me your consort.

*Mene.* Such unmanly deeds  
As these thou speak'st of would disgrace the chief  
Who conquered Troy.

*Helen.* You cannot slay the king,  
Which is perhaps the project you have formed.

*Mene.* Hath he then such a body as no steel  
Can penetrate?

*Helen.* My reasons you shall know.  
But it becomes not a wise man t' attempt  
What cannot be performed.

*Mene.* Shall I submit  
My hands in silence to the galling chain?

*Helen.* You know not how to act in these dire straits  
To which we are reduced: but of some plot  
Must we avail ourselves.

*Mene.* 'Twere best to die  
In some brave action than without a conflict.

*Helen.* One only hope of safety yet remains.

*Mene.* By gold can it be purchased, or depends it  
On dauntless courage, or persuasive words?

*Helen.* Of your arrival if the monarch hear not.

*Mene.* Who can inform him? he will never sure  
Know who I am.

*Helen.* He hath a sure associate,  
Within his palace, equal to the gods.

*Mene.* Some voice which from its inmost chamber  
sounds?

*Helen.* No: 'tis his sister, her they call Theonoe

*Mene.* She bears indeed a most prophetic name;  
But say, what mighty deeds can she perform?

*Helen.* All things she knows, and will inform her brother  
That you are here.

*Mene.* We both, alas ! must die,  
Nor can I possibly conceal myself.

*Helen.* Could our united supplications move her ?

*Mene.* To do what action ? Into what vain hope  
Wouldst thou mislead me ?

*Helen.* Not to tell her brother  
That you are in the land.

*Mene.* If we prevail  
Thus far, can we escape from these domains ?

*Helen.* With ease, if she concur in our design,  
But not without her knowledge.

*Mene.* This depends  
On thee : for woman best prevails with woman.

*Helen.* Around her knees these suppliant hands I'll twine.

*Mene.* Go then ; but what if she reject our prayer ?

*Helen.* You certainly must die ; and I by force  
Shall to the king be wedded.

*Mene.* Thou betray'st me  
That force thou talk'st of is but mere pretence.

*Helen.* But by your head that sacred oath I swear.

*Mene.* What sayst thou, wilt thou die, and never change  
Thy husband ?

*Helen.* By the self-same sword : my corse  
Shall lie beside you.

*Mene.* To confirm the words  
Which thou hast spoken, take my hand.

*Helen.* I take  
Your hand, and swear that after you are dead  
I will not live.

*Mene.* And I will put an end  
To my existence, if deprived of thee.

*Helen.* But how shall we die so as to procure  
Immortal glory ?

*Mene.* Soon as on the tomb  
Thee I have slain, myself will I destroy.  
But first a mighty conflict shall decide  
Our claims who to thy bridal bed aspire.  
Let him who dares, draw near : for the renown  
I won at Troy, I never will belie,  
Nor yet returning to the Grecian shore  
Suffer unnumbered taunts for having reft  
Thetis of her Achilles, and beheld

Ajax the Telamonian hero slain,  
 With Neleus' grandson, though I dare not bleed  
 To save my consort. Yet on thy behalf  
 Without regret, will I surrender up  
 This fleeting life: for if the gods are wise  
 They lightly scatter dust upon the tomb  
 Of the brave man who by his foes is slain,  
 But pile whole mountains on the coward's breast.

*Chorus.* O may the race of Tantalus, ye gods,  
 At length be prosperous, may their sorrows cease!

*Helen.* Wretch that I am! for such is my hard fate:  
 O Menelaus, we are lost for ever.  
 The prophetess Theonoe, from the palace  
 Comes forth: I hear the sounding gates unbarred.  
 Fly from this spot. But whither can you fly?  
 For your arrival here, full well she knows,  
 Absent, or present. How, O wretched me,  
 Am I undone! in safety you return  
 From Troy, from a barbarian land, to rush  
 Again upon the swords of fresh barbarians.

THEONOE, MENELAUS, HELEN, CHORUS.

*Theonoe* [*to one of her Attendants*].

Lead thou the way, sustaining in thy hand  
 The kindled torch, and fan the ambient air,  
 Observing every due and solemn rite,  
 That we may breathe the purest gales of Heaven.  
 Meanwhile do thou, if any impious foot  
 Have marked the path, with lustral flames efface  
 The taint, and wave the pitchy brand around,  
 That I may pass; and when we have performed  
 Our duteous homage to th' immortal powers,  
 Into the palace let the flame be borne,  
 Restore it to the Lares. What opinion  
 Have you, O Helen, of th' events foretold  
 By my prophetic voice? Your husband comes,  
 Your Menelaus in this land appears,  
 Reft of his ships, and of your image reft.  
 'Scaped from what dangers, O unhappy man,  
 Art thou arrived, although thou know'st not yet  
 Whether thou e'er shalt to thy home return,  
 Or here remain. For there is strife in Heaven;

And Jove on thy account this day will hold  
A council; Juno who was erst thy foe,  
Now grown benignant, with thy consort safe  
To Sparta would convey thee, that all Greece  
May understand that the fictitious nuptials  
Of Paris, were the baleful gift of Venus.  
But Venus wants to frustrate thy return,  
Lest she should be convicted, or appear  
At least the palm of beauty to have purchased  
By vending Helen for a wife to Paris.  
But this important question to decide,  
On me depends; I either can destroy thee,  
Which is the wish of Venus, by informing  
My brother thou art here; or save thy life  
By taking Juno's side, and thy arrival  
Concealing from my brother, who enjoined me  
To inform him whensoe'er thou on these shores  
Shouldst land. Who bears the tidings to my brother.  
That Menelaus' self is here, to save me  
From his resentment?

*Helen.*

At thy knees I fall,  
O virgin, as a suppliant, and here take  
My miserable seat, both for myself,  
And him whom, scarce restored to me, I see  
Now on the verge of death. Forbear t' inform  
Thy brother, that to these fond arms my lord  
Again is come. O save him, I implore thee;  
Nor gratify thy brother, by betraying  
The feelings of humanity, to purchase  
A wicked and unjust applause: for Jove  
Detests all violence, he bids us use  
What we possess, but not increase our stores  
By rapine. It is better to be poor,  
Than gain unrighteous wealth. For all mankind  
Enjoy these common blessings, Air and Earth;  
Nor ought we our own house with gold to fill,  
By keeping fraudfully another's right,  
Or seizing it by violence. For Hermes,  
Commissioned by the blest immortal powers,  
Hath, at my cost, consigned me to thy sire,  
To keep me for this husband, who is here  
And claims me back again: but by what means



Can he receive me after he is dead?  
Or how can the Ægyptian king restore me  
A living consort to my breathless lord?  
Consider therefore, both the will of Heaven  
And that of thy great father. Would the god,  
Would the deceased, surrender up or keep  
Another's right? I deem they would restore it.  
Hence to thy foolish brother shouldst not thou  
Pay more respect than to thy virtuous sire.  
And sure if thou, a prophetess, who utter'st  
Th' oracular responses of the gods,  
Break'st through thy father's justice, to comply  
With an unrighteous brother: it were base  
In thee to understand each mystic truth  
Revealed by the immortal powers, the things  
That are, and those that are not; yet o'erlook  
The rules of justice. But O stoop to save  
Me, miserable me, from all those ills  
In which I am involved; this great exertion  
Of thy benignant aid, my fortunes claim.  
For there is no man who abhors not Helen;  
'Tis rumoured through all Greece that I betrayed  
My husband, and abode beneath the roofs  
Of wealthy Phrygia. But to Greece once more  
Should I return and to the Spartan realm;  
When they are told, and see, how to the arts  
Of these contending goddesses they owe  
Their ruin; but that I have to my friends  
Been ever true, they to the rank I held  
'Midst chaste and virtuous matrons, will restore me:  
My daughter too, whom no man dares to wed,  
From me her bridal portion shall receive;  
And I, no longer doomed to lead the life  
Of an unhappy vagrant, shall enjoy  
The treasures that our palaces contain.  
Had Menelaus died, and been consumed  
In the funereal pyre, I should have wept  
For him far distant in a foreign realm;  
But now shall I for ever be bereft  
Of him who lives, and seem to have escaped  
From every danger. Virgin, act not thus;  
To thee I kneel a suppliant; O confer

On me this boon, and emulate the justice  
Of your great sire. For fair renown attends  
The children, from a virtuous father sprung,  
Who equal their hereditary worth.

*Theonoe.* Most piteous are the words which you have  
spoken ;

You also claim my pity : but I wish  
To hear what Menelaus yet can plead  
To save his life.

*Men.*

I cannot at your knees  
Fall prostrate, or with tears these eyelids stain :  
For I should cover all the great exploits  
Which I achieved at Ilion with disgrace,  
If I became a dastard ; though some hold  
'Tis not unworthy of the brave to weep  
When wretched. But this honourable part  
(If such a part can e'er be honourable)  
I will not act, because the prosperous fortunes  
Which erst were mine, are present to my soul.  
If then you haply are disposed to save  
A foreigner who justly claims his wife,  
Restore her, and protect us : if you spurn  
Our suit, I am not now for the first time,  
But have been often wretched, and your name  
Shall be recorded as an impious woman.  
These thoughts, which I hold worthy of myself,  
And just, and such as greatly must affect  
Your inmost heart, I at your father's tomb  
With energy will utter. Good old man,  
Beneath this marble sepulchre who dwell'st,  
To thee I sue, restore my wife, whom Jove  
Sent hither to thy realm, that thou for me  
Might'st guard her. Thou, I know, since thou art  
dead,

Canst ne'er have power to give her back again :  
But she, this holy priestess, will not suffer  
Reproach to fall on her illustrious sire,  
Whom I invoke amid the shades beneath :  
For this depends on her. Thee too I call,  
O Pluto, to my aid, who hast received  
Full many a corse, which fell in Helen's cause  
Beneath my sword, and still retain'st the prize :

# Euripides

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Either restore them now to life, or force  
 Her who seems mightier than her pious father,  
 To give me back my wife. But of my consort  
 If ye resolve to rob me, I will urge  
 Those arguments which Helen hath omitted.  
 Know then, O virgin, first I by an oath  
 Have bound myself, your brother to encounter,  
 And he, or I, must perish; the plain truth  
 Is this. But foot to foot in equal combat,  
 If he refuse to meet me, and attempt  
 To drive us suppliants from the tomb by famine,  
 My consort will I slay, and with the sword  
 Here on this sepulchre my bosom pierce,  
 That the warm current of our blood may stream  
 Into the grave. Thus shall our corpses lie  
 Close to each other on this polished marble:  
 To you eternal sorrow shall they cause,  
 And foul reproach to your great father's name.  
 For neither shall your brother wed my Helen,  
 Nor any man beside: for I with me  
 Will bear her; if I cannot bear her home,  
 Yet will I bear her to the shades beneath.  
 But why complain? If I shed tears, and act  
 The woman's part, I rather shall become  
 An object of compassion, than deserve  
 To be esteemed a warrior. If you list,  
 Slay me, for I can never fall inglorious.  
 But rather yield due credence to my words,  
 So will you act with justice, and my wife  
 Shall I recover.

*Chorus.* To decide the cause  
 On which we speak, belongs to thee, O virgin:  
 But so decide as to please all.

*Theonoe.* By nature  
 And inclination am I formed to act  
 With piety, myself too I revere:  
 Nor will I e'er pollute my sire's renown,  
 Or gratify my brother by such means  
 As might make me seem base. For from my birth,  
 Hath justice in this bosom fixed her shrine:  
 And since from Nereus I inherited  
 This temper, Menelaus will I strive

To save. But now since Juno is disposed  
 To be your friend, with her will I accord :  
 May Venus be propitious, though her rites  
 I never have partaken, and will strive  
 For ever to remain a spotless maid.  
 But I concur with thee, O Menelaus,  
 In all thou to my father at his tomb  
 Hast said : for with injustice should I act  
 If I restored not Helen : had he lived,  
 My sire on thee again would have bestowed  
 Thy consort, and her former lord on Helen.  
 For vengeance, in the shades of Hell beneath,  
 And among all that breathe the vital air,  
 Attends on those who break their plighted trust.  
 The soul of the deceased, although it live  
 Indeed no longer, yet doth still retain  
 A consciousness which lasts for ever, lodged  
 In the eternal scene of its abode,  
 The liquid ether. To express myself  
 Concisely, all that you requested me  
 Will I conceal, nor with my counsels aid  
 My brother's folly ; I to him shall show  
 A real friendship, though without the semblance,  
 If I his vicious manners can reform  
 And make him more religious. Therefore find  
 Means to escape yourselves ; for I will hence  
 Depart in silence. First implore the gods ;  
 To Venus sue, that she your safe return  
 Would suffer ; and to Juno, not to change  
 The scheme which she hath formed, both to  
 preserve

Your lord and you. O my departed sire,  
 For thee will I exert my utmost might,  
 That on thy honoured name no foul reproach  
 May ever rest. [Exit THEONOE.

*Chorus.*

No impious man e'er prospered :

But fairest hopes attend an honest cause.

*Helen.*

O Menelaus, as to what depends

Upon the royal maid, are we secure :

But next doth it become you to propose

Some means our safety to effect.

*Mene.*

Now listen

To me ; thou in this palace long hast dwelt,  
An inmate with the servants of the king.

*Helen.* Why speak you thus ? for you raise hopes as though  
You could do somewhat for our common good.

*Mene.* Canst thou prevail on any one of those  
Who guide the harnessed steeds, to furnish us  
With a swift car ?

*Helen.* Perhaps I might succeed  
In that attempt. But how shall we escape  
Who to these fields and this barbarian land  
Are strangers ? An impracticable thing  
Is this you speak of.

*Mene.* Well, but in the palace  
Concealed, if with this sword the king I slay.

*Helen.* His sister will not suffer this in silence  
If you attempt aught 'gainst her brother's life.

*Mene.* We have no ship in which we can escape ;  
For that which we brought hither, by the waves  
Is swallowed up.

*Helen.* Now hear what I propose ;  
From woman's lips if wisdom ever flow.  
Will you permit a rumour of your death  
To be dispersed ?

*Mene.* This were an evil omen :  
But I, if any benefit arise  
From such report, consent to be called dead  
While I yet live.

*Helen.* That impious tyrant's pity  
Our female choir shall move, with tresses shorn,  
And chaunt funeral strains.

*Mene.* What tendency  
Can such a project have to our deliverance ?

*Helen.* I will allege that 'tis an ancient custom ;  
And of the monarch his permission crave,  
That I on you, as if you in the sea  
Had perished, may bestow a vacant tomb.

*Mene.* If he consent, how can this feigned interment  
Enable us to fly without a ship ?

*Helen.* I will command a bark to be prepared,  
From whence into the bosom of the deep  
Funereal trappings I may cast.

*Mene.* How well

And wisely hast thou spoken ! but the tomb  
If he direct thee on the strand to raise,  
Nought can this scheme avail.

*Helen.* But I will say  
'Tis not the usage, in a Grecian realm,  
With earth to cover the remains of those  
Who perished in the waves.

*Mene.* Thou hast again  
Removed this obstacle : I then with thee  
Will sail, and the funereal trappings place  
In the same vessel.

*Helen.* 'Tis of great importance  
That you, and all those mariners who 'scaped  
The shipwreck, should be present.

*Mene.* If we find  
A bark at anchor, with our falchions armed  
In one collected band will we assail  
And board it.

*Helen.* To direct all this, belongs  
To you ; but may the prosperous breezes fill  
Our sails, and guide us o'er the billowy deep.

*Mene.* These vows shall be accomplished ; for the gods  
At length will cause my toils to cease : but whence  
Wilt thou pretend thou heard'st that I was dead ?

*Helen.* Yourself shall be the messenger ; relate  
How you alone escaped his piteous doom,  
A partner of the voyage with the son  
Of Atreus, and the witness of his death.

*Mene.* This tattered vest will testify my shipwreck.

*Helen.* How seasonable was that which seemed at first  
To be a grievous loss ! but the misfortune  
May end perhaps in bliss.

*Mene.* Must I with thee  
Enter the palace, or before this tomb  
Sit motionless ?

*Helen.* Here stay : for if the king  
By force should strive to tear you hence, this tomb  
And your drawn sword will save you. But I'll go  
To my apartment, shear my flowing hair,  
For sable weeds this snowy vest exchange,  
And rend with bloody nails these livid cheeks :  
For 'tis a mighty conflict, and I see

These two alternatives : if in my plots  
 Detected, I must die ; or to my country  
 I shall return, and save your life. O Juno,  
 Thou sacred queen, who shar'st the couch of Jove,  
 Relieve two wretches from their toils ; to thee  
 Our suppliant arms uplifting high t'wards Heaven  
 With glittering stars adorned, thy blest abode,  
 We sue : and thou, O Venus, who didst gain  
 The palm of beauty through my promised 'spousals,  
 Spare me, thou daughter of Dione, spare ;  
 For thou enough hast injured me already ;  
 Exposing not my person, but my name,  
 To those barbarians ; suffer me to die,  
 If thou wilt slay me, in my native land.  
 Why art thou still insatiably malignant ?  
 Why dost thou harass me by love, by fraud,  
 By the invention of these new deceits,  
 And by thy magic philtres plunge in blood  
 Our miserable house ? If thou hadst ruled  
 With mildness, thou to man hadst been most grateful  
 Of all the gods. I speak not this at random.

[HELEN and MENELAUS retire behind the tomb.]

# CHORUS.

## ODE.

### I. I.

On thee who build'st thy tuneful seat  
 Protected by the leafy groves, I call,  
 O nightingale, thy accents ever sweet  
 Their murmuring melancholy fall  
 Prolong ! O come, and with thy plaintive strain  
 Aid me to utter my distress,  
 Thy woes, O Helen, let the song express,  
 And those of Troy now levelled with the plain  
 By Grecian might. From hospitable shores,  
 Relying on barbaric oars,  
 The spoiler Paris fled,  
 And o'er the deep to Priam's realm with pride  
 Before his imaginary bride,  
 Fancying that thou hadst graced his bed,  
 To nuptials fraught with shame by wanton Venus led.

## I. 2.

Unnumbered Greeks, transpierced with spears,  
Or crushed beneath the falling ramparts, bled :  
Hence with her tresses shorn, immersed in tears  
The matron wails her lonely bed,  
But Nauplius, kindling near th' Euboean deep  
Those torches, o'er our host prevailed ;  
Though with a single bark the traitor sailed,  
He wrecked whole fleets against Caphareus' steep,  
And the Ægean coasts, the beacon seemed  
A star, and through Heaven's conclave gleamed,  
Placed on the craggy height.  
While flushed with conquest, from the Phrygian strand  
They hastened to their native land,  
Portentous source of bloody fight,  
The cloud by Juno formed, beguiled their dazzled sight.

## II. 1.

Whether the image was divine,  
Drew from terrestrial particles its birth,  
Or from the middle region, how define  
By curious search, ye sons of earth ?  
Far from unravelling Heaven's abstruse intents,  
We view the world tost to and fro,  
Mark strange vicissitudes of joy and woe,  
Discordant and miraculous events.  
Thou, Helen, art indeed the child of Jove.  
The swan, thy sire, inflamed by love,  
To Leda's bosom flew :  
Yet with imputed crimes malignant fame  
Through Greece arraigns thy slandered name.  
Of men I know not whom to trust,  
But what the gods pronounce have I found ever just.

## II. 2.

Frantic are ye who seek renown  
Amid the horrors of th' embattled field,  
Who masking guilt beneath a laurel crown  
With nervous arm the falchion wield,  
Not slaughtered thousands can your fury sate.  
If still success the judgment guide,  
If bloody battle right and wrong decide,



Incessant strife must vex each rival state :  
 Hence from her home departs each Phrygian wife,  
     O Helen, when the cruel strife  
         Which from thy charms arose,  
 One conference might have closed : now myriads dwell  
     With Pluto in the shades of Hell,  
     And flames, as when Jove's vengeance throws  
 The bolt, have caught her towers and finished Ilion's woes.

THEOCLYMENUS, CHORUS (*HELEN and MENELAUS  
 behind the tomb*).

*Theocly.* Hail, O thou tomb of my illustrious sire !  
 For thee have I interred before my gate,  
 That with thy shade I might hold frequent conference  
 O Proteus ; Theoclymenus thy son  
 Thee, O my father, oft as he goes forth,  
 Oft as he enters these abodes, accosts.  
 But to the palace now convey those hounds  
 And nets, my servants. I full many a time  
 Have blamed myself, because I never punished  
 With death such miscreants ; now I am informed  
 That publicly some Greek to these domains  
 Is come unnoticed by my guards, a spy,  
 Or one who means to carry Helen off  
 By stealth : but if I seize him, he shall die.  
 Methinks I find all over : for the daughter  
 Of Tyndarus sits no longer at the tomb,  
 But from these shores hath fled, and now is crossing  
 The billowy deep. Unbar the gates, bring forth  
 My coursers from the stalls, and brazen cars ;  
 Lest through my want of vigilance the dame  
 Whom I would make my consort, should escape me,  
 Borne from this land. Yet stay ; for I behold  
 Those we pursue still here beneath this roof,  
 Nor are they fled. Ho ! why in sable vest  
 Hast thou arrayed thyself, why cast aside  
 Thy robes of white, and from thy graceful head  
 With ruthless steel thy glowing ringlets shorn,  
 And wherefore bathed thy cheek with recent tears ?  
 Groan'st thou, by visions of the night apprized  
 Of some calamity, or hast thou heard  
 Within, a rumour that afflicts thy soul ?

*Helen.* My lord (for I already by that name  
Accost you), I am utterly undone,  
My former bliss is vanished, and I now  
Am nothing.

*Theocly.* Art thou plunged into distress  
So irretrievable? what cruel fate  
Hath overtaken thee?

*Helen.* My Menelaus,  
(Ah, how shall I express myself?) is dead.

*Theocly.* Although I must not triumph in th' event  
Thou speak'st of, yet to me 'tis most auspicious.  
How know'st thou? Did Theonoe tell thee this?

*Helen.* She and this mariner, who when he perished  
Was present, both concur in the same tale.

*Theocly.* Is there a man arrived, who for the truth  
Of that account can vouch?

*Helen.* He is arrived :  
And would to Heaven that such auspicious fortune  
As I could wish attended him.

*Theocly.* Who is he?  
Where is he? I would know the real fact.

*Helen.* 'Tis he who stupefied with sorrow sits  
Upon the tomb.

*Theocly.* In what unseemly garb  
Is he arrayed, O Phœbus!

*Helen.* In that dress,  
Ah me! methinks my husband I behold.

*Theocly.* But in what country was the stranger born,  
And whence did he come hither?

*Helen.* He's a Greek,  
One of those Greeks who with my husband sailed.

*Theocly.* How doth he say that Menelaus died?

*Helen.* Most wretchedly, engulfed amid the waves.

*Theocly.* Where? as he passed o'er the barbarian seas?

*Helen.* Dashed on the rocks of Libya, which affords  
No haven.

*Theocly.* But whence happened it, that he  
This partner of his voyage did not perish?

*Helen.* The worthless are more prosperous than the brave.

*Theocly.* Where left he the wrecked fragments of his ship  
When he came hither?

*Helen.* There, where would to Heaven

Perdition had o'ertaken him, and spared  
The life of Menelaus.

*Theocly.* He, it seems,  
Is then no more: but in what bark arrived  
This messenger?

*Helen.* Some sailors, as he says,  
By chance passed by, and snatched him from the waves.

*Theocly.* But where's that hateful pest which in thy  
stead  
Was sent to Ilion?

*Helen.* Speak you of a cloud,  
Resembling me? it mounted to the skies.

*Theocly.* O Priam, for how frivolous a cause  
Thou with thy Troy didst perish!

*Helen.* In their woes  
I too have been involved.

*Theocly.* But did he leave  
Thy husband's corse unburied, or strew dust  
O'er his remains?

*Helen.* He left them uninterred,  
Ah, wretched me!

*Theocly.* And didst thou for this cause  
Sever the ringlets of thy auburn hair?

*Helen.* Still is he dear, lodged in this faithful breast

*Theocly.* Hast thou sufficient reason then to weep  
For this calamity?

*Helen.* Could you bear lightly  
Your sister's death?

*Theocly.* No surely. But what means  
Thy still residing at this marble tomb?

*Helen.* Why do you harass me with taunting words,  
And why disturb the dead?

*Theocly.* Because, still constant  
To thy first husband, from my love thou fliest.

*Helen.* But I will fly no longer: haste, begin  
The nuptial rite.

*Theocly.* 'Twas long ere thou didst come  
To this: but I such conduct must applaud.

*Helen.* Know you then how to act? let us forget  
All that has passed.

*Theocly.* Upon what terms? with kindness  
Should kindness be repaid.

- Helen.* Let us conclude  
The peace, and O be reconciled.
- Theocly.* All strife  
With thee I to the winds of heaven consign.
- Helen.* Now, since you are my friend, I by those knees  
Conjure you.
- Theocly.* With what object in thy view,  
To me an earnest suppliant dost thou bend?
- Helen.* I my departed husband would inter.
- Theocly.* What tomb can be bestowed upon the absent  
Wouldst thou inter his shade?
- Helen.* There is a custom  
Among the Greeks established, that the man  
Who in the ocean perishes——
- Theocly.* What is it?  
For in such matters Pelops' race are wise.
- Helen.* To bury in their stead an empty vest.
- Theocly.* Perform funereal rites, and heap the tomb  
On any ground thou wilt.
- Helen.* We in this fashion  
Bury not the drowned mariner.
- Theocly.* How then?  
I am a stranger to the Grecian customs.
- Helen.* Each pious gift due to our breathless friends  
We cast into the sea.
- Theocly.* On the deceased  
What presents for thy sake can I bestow?
- Helen.* I know not : for in offices like these  
Am I unpractised, having erst been happy.
- Theocly.* An acceptable message have you brought,  
O stranger.
- Mene.* Most ungrateful to myself  
And the deceased.
- Theocly.* What funereal rites on those  
Ocean hath swallowed up, do ye bestow?
- Mene.* Such honours as each individual's wealth  
Enables us to pay him.
- Theocly.* Name the cost,  
And for her sake receive whate'er you will.
- Mene.* Blood is our first libation to the dead.
- Theocly.* What blood? inform me, for with your instructions  
I will comply.

- Mene.* Determine that thyself,  
For whatsoever thou giv'st will be sufficient.
- Theocly.* The customary victims 'mong barbarians  
Are either horse or bull.
- Mene.* Whate'er thou giv'st,  
Let it be somewhat princely.
- Theocly.* My rich herds  
With these are amply furnished.
- Mene.* And the bier  
Without the corse is borne in solemn state.
- Theocly.* It shall: but what is there beside which custom  
Requires to grace the funeral.
- Mene.* Brazen arms:  
For war was what he loved.
- Theocly.* We will bestow  
Such presents as are worthy of the race  
Of mighty Pelops.
- Mene.* And those budding flowers  
Th' exuberant soil produces.
- Theocly.* But say, how  
And in what manner ye these offerings plunge  
Into the ocean.
- Mene.* We must have a bark  
And mariners to ply the oars.
- Theocly.* How far  
Will they launch forth the vessel from the strand?
- Mene.* So far as from the shore thou scarce wilt see  
The keel divide the waves.
- Theocly.* But why doth Greece  
Observe this usage?
- Mene.* Lest the rising billows  
Cast back to land th' ablutions.
- Theocly.* Ye shall have  
A swift Phœnician vessel.
- Mene.* This were kind,  
And no small favour shown to Menelaus.
- Theocly.* Without her presence, cannot you perform  
These rites alone?
- Mene.* Such task or to a mother,  
Or wife, or child, belongs.
- Theocly.* 'Tis then her duty,  
You say, to bury her departed lord?

*Mene.* Sure, piety instructs us not to rob  
The dead of their accustomed dues.

*Theocly.* Enough :

On me it is incumbent to promote  
Such virtue in my consort. I will enter  
The palace, and from thence for the deceased  
Bring forth rich ornaments ; with empty hands  
You from this region will not I send forth,  
That you may execute what she desires.  
But having brought me acceptable tidings,  
Instead of these vile weeds shall you receive  
A decent garb and food, that to your country  
You may return : for clearly I perceive  
That you are wretched now. But torture not  
Thy bosom with unprofitable cares,  
O hapless woman, for thy Menelaus  
Is now no more, nor can the dead revive.

*Mene.* Thee it behoves, O blooming dame, to love  
Thy present husband, and to lay aside  
The fond remembrance of thy breathless lord ;  
For such behaviour suits thy fortunes best.  
But if to Greece with safety I return,  
That infamy which erst pursued thy name  
I'll cause to cease, if thou acquit thyself  
Of these great duties like a virtuous consort.

*Helen.* I will ; nor shall my husband e'er have cause  
To blame me : you too, who are here, shall witness  
The truth of my assertions. But within  
Go lave your wearied limbs, O wretched man,  
And change your habit ; for without delay  
To you will I become a benefactress.  
Hence too with greater zeal will you perform  
The rites my dearest Menelaus claims,  
If all due honours you from me receive.

[*Exeunt THEOCLYMENUS, HELEN, and MENELAUS.*]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

O'er mountains erst with hasty tread  
Did the celestial mother stray,

Nor stop where branching thickets spread,  
 Where rapid torrents crossed her way,  
 Or on the margin of the billowy deep ;  
     Her daughter whom we dread to name  
 She wept, while hailing that majestic dame,  
 Cymbals of Bacchus from the craggy steep  
     Sent forth their clear and piercing sound,  
     Her car the harnessed dragons drew ;  
 Following the nymph torn from her virgin crew.  
 Amidst her maidens swift of foot were found  
     Diana skilled the bow to wield,  
     Minerva, who in glittering state  
 Brandished the spear and raised her Gorgon shield ;  
 But Jove looked down from Heaven t'award another fate.

## I. 2.

Soon as the mother's toils were o'er,  
 When she had finished her career,  
 And sought the ravished maid no more,  
 To caves where drifted snows appear,  
 By Ida's nymphs frequented, did she pass,  
 And threw herself in sorrow lost,  
 On rocks and herbage crusted o'er with frost,  
 Despoiled the wasted champaign of its grass,  
     Rendered the peasant's tillage vain,  
     Consuming a dispeopled land  
 With meagre famine ; Spring at her command  
 Denied the flocks that sickened on the plain  
     The leafy tendrils of the vine ;  
     Whole cities died, no victims bled,  
 No frankincense perfumed Heaven's vacant shrine ;  
 Nor burst the current from the Spring's obstructed head.

## II. I.

Then ceased the banquet, wont to charm  
 Both gods above and men below :  
 The mother's anger to disarm,  
 And mitigate the stings of woe,  
 Till in these words Jove uttered his behests :  
     " Let each benignant grace attend  
 Sweet music's sympathizing aid to lend,  
 And drive corrosive grief from Ceres' breast

Indignant for her ravished child :  
 Now, O ye Muses, with the lyre  
 Join the shrill hymns of your assembled choir,  
 The brazen trumpet fill with accents wild,  
 And beat the rattling drums amain."  
 Then first of the immortal band,  
 Venus with lovely smile approved the strain,  
 And raised the deep-toned flute in her enchanting hand.

## II. 2.

The laws reproved such foul desire,  
 Yet 'gainst religion didst thou wed ;  
 Thy uncle caught love's baleful fire,  
 And rushed to thy incestuous bed.  
 Thee shall the mighty mother's wrath confound,  
 Because, through thee, before her shrine  
 No victims slain appease the powers divine.  
 Great virtue have hinds' hides, and ivy wound  
 Upon a consecrated rod ;  
 And youths, with virgins in a ring,  
 When high from earth with matchless force they spring,  
 Loose streams their hair, they celebrate that god  
 The Bacchanalian votaries own,  
 And waste in dance the sleepless night.  
 But thou, confiding in thy charms alone,  
 Forgett'st the moon that shines with more transcendent  
 light.

## HELEN, CHORUS.

*Helen.* Within the palace, O my friends, we prosper  
 For Proteus' royal daughter, in our schemes  
 Conspiring when her brother questioned her  
 About my lord, no information gave  
 Of his arrival : to my interests true  
 She said, that cold in death he views no longer  
 The radiant sun. But now my lord hath seized  
 A vengeful falchion, in that mail designed  
 To have been plunged beneath the deep arrayed  
 With nervous arm he lifts an orb'd shield,  
 In his right hand protended gleams the spear,  
 As if with me he was prepared to pay  
 To the deceased due homage. Furnished thus



With brazen arms, he's ready for the battle,  
 And numberless barbarians will subdue  
 Unaided, soon as we the ship ascend.  
 Exchanging those unseemly weeds which clothe  
 The shipwrecked mariner, in splendid robes  
 Have I arrayed him, from transparent springs  
 The laver filled, and bathed his wearied limbs.  
 But I must now be silent, for the man  
 Who fancies I am ready to become  
 His consort, leaves the palace. O my friends,  
 In your attachment too I place my trust,  
 Restrain your tongues, for we, when saved ourselves,  
 If possible will save you from this thralldom.

THEOCLYMENUS, HELEN, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

*Theocly.* Go forth, in such procession as the stranger  
 Directs you, O my servants, and convey  
 These gifts funereal to the briny deep.  
 But if thou disapprove not what I say,  
 Do thou, O Helen, yield to my persuasions,  
 And here remain. For whether thou attend,  
 Or art not present at the obsequies  
 Of thy departed husband, thou to him  
 Wilt show an equal reverence. Much I dread  
 Lest hurried on by wild desire thou plunge  
 Into the foaming billows, for the sake  
 Of him on whom thou doat'st, thy former lord,  
 Since thou his doom immoderately bewail'st  
 Though he be lost, and never can return.

*Helen.* O my illustrious husband, I am bound  
 To pay due honours to the man whom first  
 I wedded, of our ancient nuptial joys  
 A memory still retaining, for so well  
 I loved my lord that I could even die  
 With him. But what advantage would result  
 To the deceased, should I lay down my life?  
 Yet let me go myself, and to his shade  
 Perform each solemn rite. But may the gods,  
 On you, and on the stranger who assists me  
 In this my pious task, with liberal hand  
 Confer the gifts I wish. But you in me  
 Shall such a consort to your palace bear

As you deserve, to recompense your kindness  
 To me and Menelaus. Such events  
 In some degree are measured by the will  
 Of Fortune: but give orders for a ship  
 To be prepared, these trappings to convey,  
 So shall your purposed bounty be complete.

*Theocly.* [to one of his Attendants.]

Go thou, and furnish them a Tyrian bark  
 Of fifty oars, with skilful sailors manned.

*Helen.* But may not he who decorates the tomb  
 Govern the ship?

*Theocly.* My sailors must to him  
 Yield an implicit deference.

*Helen.* This injunction  
 Repeat, that they may clearly understand it.

*Theocly.* A second time, will I, and yet a third,  
 Issue this self-same mandate, if to thee  
 This can give pleasure.

*Helen.* May the gods confer  
 Blessings on you, and prosper my designs!

*Theocly.* Waste not thy bloom with unavailing tears.

*Helen.* To you this day my gratitude will prove.

*Theocly.* All these attentions to the dead are nought  
 But unavailing toil.

*Helen.* My pious care

Not to those only whom the silent grave  
 Contains, but to the living too extends.

*Theocly.* In me thou mayst expect to find a husband  
 Who yields not to the Spartan Menelaus.

*Helen.* I censure not your conduct, but bewail  
 My own harsh destiny.

*Theocly.* Bestow thy love  
 On me, and prosperous fortunes shall return.

*Helen.* It is a lesson I have practised long,  
 To love my friends.

*Theocly.* Shall I my navy launch,  
 To join in these funereal rites?

*Helen.* Dread lord,  
 Pay not unseemly homage to your vassals.

*Theocly.* Well! I each sacred usage will allow  
 Practised by Pelops' race, for my abodes  
 Are undefiled with blood: thy Menelaus

In Egypt died not. But let some one haste  
 And bid the nobles bear into my house  
 The bridal gifts : for the whole earth is bound  
 To celebrate in one consenting hymn  
 My blest espousals with the lovely Helen,  
 But go, embark upon the briny main,  
 O stranger, and as soon as ye have paid  
 All decent homage to her former lord  
 Bring back my consort hither : that with me  
 When you have feasted at our nuptial rite  
 You to your native mansion may return,  
 Or here continue in a happy state.

[*Exit* THEOCLYMENUS.]

*Mene.* O Jove, thou mighty father, who art called  
 A god supreme in wisdom, from thy heaven  
 Look down, and save us from our woes : delay not  
 To aid us : for we drag the galling yoke  
 Of sorrow and mischance : if with thy finger  
 Thou do but touch us, we shall soon attain  
 The fortune which we wish for, since the toils  
 We have endured already are sufficient.  
 Ye gods, I now invoke you, from my mouth  
 So shall ye hear full many joyful accents  
 Mixed with these bitter plaints : for I deserve not  
 To be for ever wretched ; but to tread  
 At length secure. O grant me this one favour,  
 And make my future life completely blest.

[*Exeunt* MENELAUS and HELEN.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

Swift bark of Sidon, by whose dashing oars  
 Divided oft, the frothy billows rise,  
 Propitious be thy voyage from these shores :  
     In thy train the dolphins play,  
     O'er the deep thou lead'st the way,  
 While motionless its placid surface lies.  
     Soon as Serenity the fair,  
     That azure daughter of the main,  
     Shall in this animating strain

Have spoken : "To the gentle breeze of air  
Expand each undulating sail,  
Row briskly on before the gale,  
Ye mariners, in Perseus' ancient seat  
Till Helen rest her wearied feet."

## I. 2.

Those sacred nymphs shall welcome thy return  
Who guard the portals of Minerva's fane  
Or speed the current from its murmuring urn :  
Choral dances of delight  
That prolong the jocund night,  
At Hyacinthus' banquet shalt thou join,  
Fair stripling, whom with luckless hand  
Unwitting did Apollo slay  
At games that crowned the festive day,  
Hurling his quoit on the Laconian strand ;  
To him Jove's son due honours paid :  
At Sparta too, that lovely maid  
Shalt thou behold, whom there thou left'st behind,  
Still to celibacy consigned.

## II. 1.

O might we cleave the air, like Libyan cranes,  
Who fly in ranks th' impending wintry storm ;  
When their shrill leader bids them quit the plains,  
They the veteran's voice obey,  
O'er rich harvests wing their way,  
Or where parched wastes th' unfruitful scene deform.  
With lengthened neck, ye feathered race  
Who skim the clouds in social band,  
Where the seven Pleiades expand  
Their radiance, and Orion heaves his mace,  
This joyous embassy convey  
As near Eurotas' banks ye stray ;  
That Menelaus to his subject land  
Victorious comes from Phrygia's strand.

## II. 2.

Borne in your chariot down th' ethereal height,  
At length, ye sons of Tyndarus, appear,  
While vibrates o'er your heads the starry light :

Habitants of heaven above,  
 Now exert fraternal love,  
 If ever Helen to your souls was dear,  
 A calm o'er th' azure ocean spread,  
 Bridle the tempests of the main,  
 Propitious gales from Jove obtain,  
 Your sister snatch from the barbarian's bed :  
 Commenced on Ida's hill, that strife,  
 Embittered with reproach her life,  
 Although she never viewed proud Ilion's tower  
 Reared by Apollo's matchless power.

THEOCLYMENUS, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

*Mess.* O king, I have discovered in the palace,  
 Events most inauspicious : what fresh woes  
 Is it my doleful office to relate !

*Theocly.* Say what hath happened ?

*Mess.* Seek another wife,  
 For Helen hath departed from this realm.

*Theocly.* Borne through the air on wings, or with swift foot  
 Treading the ground ?

*Mess.* Her o'er the briny main  
 From Ægypt's shores, hath Menelaus wafted,  
 Who came in person with a feigned account  
 Of his own death.

*Theocly.* O dreadful tale ! what ship  
 From these domains conveys her ? thou relat'st  
 Tidings the most incredible.

*Mess.* The same  
 You to that stranger gave, and in one word  
 To tell you all, he carries off your sailors.

*Theocly.* How is that possible ? I wish to know :  
 For such an apprehension never entered  
 My soul, as that one man could have subdued  
 The numerous band of mariners, with whom  
 Thou wert sent forth.

*Mess.* When from the royal mansion  
 Jove's daughter to the shore was borne, she trod  
 With delicate and artful step, pretending  
 To wail her husband's loss, though he was present,  
 And yet alive. But when we reached the haven,  
 Sidonia's largest vessel we hauled forth,

Furnished with benches, and with fifty oars ;  
But a fresh series of incessant toil  
Followed this toil ; for while one fixed the mast,  
Another ranged the oars, and with his hand  
The signal gave, the sails were bound together,  
Then was the rudder fastened to the stern  
With thongs, cast forth : while they observed us  
    busied

In such laborious task, the Grecian comrades  
Of Menelaus to the shore advanced,  
Clad in their shipwrecked vestments. Though their  
    form

Was graceful, yet their visages were squalid :  
But Atreus' son, beholding their approach,  
Under the semblance of a grief that masked  
His treacherous purpose, in these words addressed  
    them :

“How, O ye wretched sailors, from what bark  
Of Greece that hath been wrecked upon this coast  
Are ye come hither? will ye join with us  
In the funereal rites of Menelaus,  
Whom Tyndarus's daughter, to an empty tomb  
Consigns, though absent?” Simulated tears  
They shed, and went aboard the ship, conveying  
The presents to be cast into the sea  
For Menelaus. But to us these things  
Appeared suspicious, and we made remarks  
Among ourselves upon the numerous band  
Of our intruding passengers ; but checked  
Our tongues from speaking openly, through deference  
To your commands. For when you to that stranger  
Trusted the guidance of the ship, you caused  
This dire confusion. All beside, with ease  
Had we now lodged aboard, but could not force  
The sturdy bull t' advance ; he bellowing rolled  
His eyes around, bending his back and low'ring  
Betwixt his horns, nor dared we to approach  
And handle him. But Helen's husband cried  
“O ye who laid Troy waste, will ye forget  
To act like Greeks? why scruple ye to seize  
And on your youthful shoulders heave the beast  
Up to the rising prow, a welcome victim

To the deceased?" His falchion, as he spoke,  
 The warrior drew. His summons they obeyed,  
 Seized the stout bull, and carried him aboard:  
 But Menelaus stroked the horse's neck  
 And face, and with this gentle usage led him  
 Into the bark. At length when all its freight  
 The vessel had received, with graceful foot  
 Helen, the steps ascending, took her seat  
 On the mid deck; and Menelaus near her,  
 E'en he who they pretended was no more.  
 But some on the right side, and on the left  
 Others in equal numbers, man to man  
 Opposed, their station took, their swords concealing  
 Beneath their garments. We distinctly heard  
 The clamorous sailors animate each other  
 To undertake the voyage. But from land  
 When a convenient distance we had steered,  
 The pilot asked this question: "Shall we sail,  
 O stranger, any farther from the coast,  
 Or is this right? for 'tis my task to guide  
 The vessel." He replied: "Enough for me."  
 Then seized with his right hand the falchion, leaped  
 Upon the prow, and standing o'er the bull  
 The victim (without mentioning the name  
 Of any chief deceased; but as he drove  
 The weapon through his neck) thus prayed: "O  
     Neptune,  
 Who in the ocean dwell'st, and ye chaste daughters  
 Of Nereus, to the Nauplian shore convey  
 Me and my consort, from this hostile land,  
 In safety." But a crimson tide of blood,  
 Auspicious to the stranger, stained the waves;  
 And some exclaimed "There's treachery in this  
     voyage,  
 Let us sail homewards, issue thy commands,  
 And turn the rudder." But the son of Atreus,  
 Who had just slain the bull, to his companions  
 Called loudly: "Why delay, O ye the flower  
 Of Greece, to smite, to slaughter those barbarians,  
 And cast them from the ship into the waves?"  
 But to your sailors our commander spoke  
 A different language: "Will not some of you

Tear up a plank, or with a shattered bench,  
Or ponderous oar, upon the bleeding heads  
Of those audacious foreigners our foes,  
Impress the ghastly wound?" But on their feet  
All now stood up; our hands with nautic poles  
Were armed, and theirs with swords: a tide of  
slaughter

Ran down the ship. But Helen from the poop  
The Greeks encouraged: "Where is the renown.  
Ye gained at Troy? display 'gainst these barbarians  
The same undaunted prowess." In their haste  
Full many fell, some rose again, the rest  
Might you have seen stretched motionless in death.  
But Menelaus, sheathed in glittering mail,  
Wherever his confederates he descried  
Hard pressed, rushed thither with his lifted sword,  
Driving us headlong from the lofty deck  
Into the waves, and forced your mariners  
To quit their oars. But the victorious king  
Now seized the rudder, and to Greece declared  
He would convey the ship: they hoisted up  
The stately mast: propitious breezes came;  
They left the land: but I from death escaping,  
Let myself gently down into the waves  
Borne on the cordage which sustains the anchor;  
My strength began to fail, when some kind hand  
Threw forth a rope, and brought me safe ashore,  
That I to you these tidings might convey.  
There's nought more beneficial to mankind  
Than wise distrust.

*Chorus.*

I never could have thought  
That Menelaus who was here, O king,  
Could have imposed so grossly or on you  
Or upon us.

*Theocly.*

Wretch that I am, ensnared  
By woman's treacherous arts! the lovely bride  
I hoped for, hath escaped me. If the ship  
Could be o'ertaken by our swift pursuit,  
My wrongs would urge me with vindictive hand  
To seize the strangers. But I now will punish  
That sister who betrayed me; in my house  
Who when she saw the Spartan Menelaus,



Informed me not: she never shall deceive  
Another man by her prophetic voice.

*Chorus.* Ho! whither, O my sovereign, would you go,  
And for what bloody purpose?

*Theocly.* Where the voice  
Of rigid justice summons me. Retire,  
And stand aloof.

*Chorus.* Yet will not I let loose  
Your garment; for you hasten to commit  
A deed most mischievous.

*Theocly.* Wouldst thou, a slave,  
Govern thy lord?

*Chorus.* Here reason's on my side.

*Theocly.* That shall not I allow, if thou refuse  
To quit thy hold.

*Chorus.* I will not then release you.

*Theocly.* To slay that worst of sisters.

*Chorus.* That most pious.

*Theocly.* Her who betrayed me.

*Chorus.* Glorious was the fraud  
That caused so just a deed.

*Theocly.* When she bestowed  
My consort on another.

*Chorus.* On the man  
Who had a better claim——

*Theocly.* But who is lord  
Of what belongs to me?

*Chorus.* Who from her sire  
Received her.

*Theocly.* She by Fortune was bestowed  
On me.

*Chorus.* But ta'en away again by Fate.

*Theocly.* Thou hast no right to judge of my affairs.

*Chorus.* If I but speak to give you better counsels.

*Theocly.* I am thy subject then, and not thy king.

*Chorus.* For having acted piously, your sister  
I vindicate.

*Theocly.* Thou seem'st to wish for death.

*Chorus.* Kill me. Your sister you with my consent  
Shall never slay; I rather would yield up  
My life on her behalf. It is most glorious  
To generous servants for their lords to die.

CASTOR *and* POLLUX, THEOCLYMENUS, CHORUS.

*Cas. & P.* Restrain that ire that hurries thee away  
Beyond the bounds of reason; O thou king  
Of Ægypt's realm; and listen to the voice  
Of us twin sons of Jove, whom Leda bore  
Together with that Helen who is fled  
From thy abodes. Thou rashly hast indulged  
Thine anger, for the loss of her whom Fate  
Ne'er destined to thy bed. Nor hath thy sister  
Theonoe, from th' immortal Nereid sprung,  
To thee done any injury; she reveres  
The gods, and her great father's just behests.  
For till the present hour, was it ordained  
That Helen in thy palace should reside:  
But when Troy's walls were from their bases torn,  
And she had to the rival goddesses  
Furnished her name, no longer was it fit  
That she should for thy nuptials be detained,  
But to her ancient home return, and dwell  
With her first husband. In thy sister's breast  
Forbear to plunge the sword, and be convinced  
That she in this affair hath acted wisely.  
We long ere this our sister had preserved,  
Since Jove hath made us gods, but were too weak  
At once to combat the behests of Fate,  
And the immortal powers, who had ordained  
That these events should happen. This to thee,  
O Theoclymenus, I speak. These words  
Next to my lovely sister, I address;  
Sail with your husband, for a prosperous breeze  
Your voyage shall attend. We your protectors  
And your twin brothers, on our coursers borne  
Over the waves, will guide you to your country,  
But after you have finished life's career,  
You shall be called a goddess, shall partake  
With us the rich oblations, and receive  
The gifts of men: for thus hath Jove decreed.  
But where the son of Maia placed you first,  
When he had borne you from the Spartan realm,  
And formed by stealth from the aerial mansions  
An image of your person, to prevent  
Paris from wedding you, there is an isle

Near the Athenian realm, which men shall call  
Helen in future times, because that spot  
Received you, when in secrecy conveyed  
From Sparta. The Heavens also have ordained  
The wanderer Menelaus shall reside  
Among the happy islands. For the gods  
To those of nobler minds no hatred bear ;  
At their command though grievous toil await  
The countless multitude.

*Theocly.*

Ye sons of Jove

And Leda, I the contest will decline  
Which I at first so violently urged,  
Hoping your lovely sister to obtain,  
And my own sister's life resolve to spare :  
Let Helen to her native shores return,  
If 'tis the will of Heaven : but be assured,  
The same high blood ye spring from with the best  
And chastest sister : hail then, for the sake  
Of Helen with a lofty soul endued,  
Such as in female bosoms seldom dwells.

*Chorus.*

A thousand shapes our varying fates assume  
The gods perform what least we could expect,  
And oft the things for which we fondly hoped  
Come not to pass ; but Heaven still finds a clue  
To guide our steps through life's perplexing maze,  
And thus doth this important business end.

# ELECTRA

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AUTURGUS.

ELECTRA.

ORESTES.

PYLADES.

TUTOR.

MESSENGER.

CASTOR AND POLLUX.

CHORUS OF MYCENÆAN VIRGINS.

### AUTURGUS.

THOU ancient glory of this land, famed stream  
Of Inaches, thou sawst the mighty host,  
When in a thousand ships to Phrygia's strand  
The royal Agamemnon bore the war.  
The Dardan monarch slain, the towers of Troy  
And the proud city levelled with the ground,  
To Argos he returned, and many spoils  
From the barbarians rent triumphant fixed  
In the high temples. There his toils were crowned  
With conquest ; but by Clytemnestra's wiles,  
His wife, and by Ægisthus' murdering hands,  
Son of Thyestes, in his house he died ;  
Leaving the ancient sceptre, from the hand  
Of Tantalus to him derived, he fell.  
And now Ægisthus lords it o'er the land,  
His royal throne possessing, and his wife,  
Daughter of Tyndarus. He, when for Troy  
He sailed, his son Orestes in his house  
And young Electra's budding beauties left.  
Orestes, by Ægisthus marked for death,  
The guardian of his father's youth by stealth  
To Strophius bore, that in the Phocian land  
He might protect him. In her father's house  
Remained Electra : her, when youth's warm bloom  
Glowed on her cheek, the high-born chiefs of Greece  
In marriage sought : through fear lest she should bear  
To any Argive sons that might revenge  
The death of Agamemnon, in the house

Ægisthus held her, and repulsed the suit  
 Of ev'ry wooer. But his gloomy fears  
 Still prompting that by stealth she might bear sons  
 To one of noble lineage, he resolved  
 To kill her; but her mother, though her soul  
 Was fierce and ruthless, saved her from his hands;  
 She for her husband's murder had some plea  
 To urge, but dreaded from her children's blood  
 Public abhorrence. Then Ægisthus framed  
 These villainous designs: he offered gold,  
 The son of Agamemnon, from this land  
 Escaped, whoe'er would kill; to me espoused  
 He gives Electra; from Mycenæ sprung  
 My parents, thus far no reproach is mine,  
 My race illustrious, but not blest with wealth,  
 And poverty obscures my noble birth.  
 To one thus sunk he gave her, that his fears  
 Might likewise sink; for should she wed a man  
 Whose high rank gives him lustre, he might rouse  
 The murder of her father, sleeping now,  
 And vengeance then might on Ægisthus fall.  
 Yet, Venus be my witness, by my touch  
 She hath not been dishonoured; she is still  
 A virgin. In my humble state I scorn  
 Such insult to the daughters of the great.  
 I grieve too for Orestes, hapless youth,  
 To me in words allied, should he return  
 To Argos, and behold his sister placed  
 In marriage so unworthy of her birth.  
 This some may deem a folly, to receive  
 A virgin in my house, and touch her not;  
 But let such know that by distorted rules  
 They measure continence, themselves depraved.

ELECTRA, AUTURGUS.

*Electra.* O dark-browed Night, nurse of the golden stars,  
 In thee this vase sustaining on my head  
 I to the flowing river bend my steps  
 (Not by necessity to this compelled,  
 But to the gods to show the insolent wrongs  
 I suffer from Ægisthus), and my griefs  
 For my lost father to the wide extent

Of ether breathe : for from the royal house  
Me my destructive mother hath driven forth,  
To gratify her husband : having borne  
T' Ægisthus other children, she hath made  
Me and Orestes outcasts from the house.

*Autur.* Why wilt thou thus, unhappy lady, toil,  
For my sake bearing labours, nor desist  
At my desire? Not thus hast thou been trained.

*Electra.* Thee equal to the gods I deem my friend ;  
For in my ills thou hast not treated me  
With insult. In misfortunes thus to find,  
What I have found in thee, a gentle power  
Lenient of grief, must be a mighty source  
Of consolation. It behoves me then,  
Far as my power avails, to ease thy toils,  
That lighter thou mayst feel them, and to share  
Thy labour, though unbidden : in the fields  
Thou hast enough of work ; be it my task  
Within to order well. The lab'rer, tired  
Abroad, with pleasure to his house returns,  
Accustomed all things grateful there to find.

*Autur.* Go then, since such thy will : nor distant far  
The fountain from the house. At the first dawn  
My bullocks yoked I to the field will drive,  
And sow my furrows : for no idle wretch,  
With the gods always in his mouth, can gain  
Without due labour the support of life.

ORESTES, PYLADES.

*Orestes.* O Pylades, thee first of all mankind  
Faithful and friendly I esteem ; alone  
Hast thou received Orestes, held me high  
In thy dear love, thus with misfortunes pressed  
And suffering, as I suffer, dreadful ills,  
Wrought by Ægisthus, whose accursed hand,  
And my destructive mother joined her aid,  
Murdered my father. But the Argive soil,  
Commanded by the god's oracular voice,  
No mortal conscious to my steps, I tread,  
His murder on his murd'ers to avenge.  
This night my father's tomb have I approached,  
Poured the warm tear, presented my shorn locks.

And offered on the pyre the victim's blood,  
 Secret from those who lord it o'er this land.  
 The walls I enter not, a double charge  
 At once emprising; to the Argive bounds  
 I come, that by the tyrant's spies if known  
 I to another's realms may soon retire;  
 And seek my sister; for they say that here  
 In marriage joined she dwells, a virgin now  
 No more: with her I would hold converse, her  
 Take my associate in this deed, and learn  
 All that hath passed within the walls. But now,  
 For now the grey morn opes her radiant eye,  
 Retire we from this public path: perchance  
 Some ploughman, or some female slave, from  
 whom  
 We may gain knowledge, may in sight appear.  
 And see, a female slave, her tresses shorn,  
 Bears from the spring her vase; sit we awhile,  
 And question her, if haply from her words  
 We may learn aught for which we hither came.

ELECTRA.

*Strophe.*

Begin, begin, for this the hour,  
 The mournful measures weeping pour.  
 Is there a wretch like me on earth?  
 The royal Agamemnon gave me birth,  
 My mother Clytemnestra—shame  
 Fall on that odious name!  
 And me each tongue within Mycenæ's walls  
 Th' unhappy, lost Electra calls.  
 My soul to grief a prey,  
 My hated life in anguish wastes away:  
 My tears for thee, my father, flow,  
 For in the shades below,  
 By cursed Ægisthus and his barb'rous wife—  
 Ah me, ah me, my miseries!—  
 Basely deprived of life,  
 The royal Agamemnon lies.  
 Yet once more raise the tearful strain,  
 The sweetly-mournful measures soothe my pain.

*Antistrophe.*

Begin, begin, for this the hour,  
The mournful members weeping pour.  
Unhappy brother, in what state,  
What house is cruel servitude thy fate,  
Thy sister, in those rooms confined  
Once by her sire assigned  
The chaste retirement of her happier years,  
Thy wretched sister left to tears,  
Tears which incessant flow  
From the deep anguish of severest woe?  
O mayst thou come (O Jove, O Jove,  
Hear from thy throne above!)  
To soothe the pangs my tortured heart that rend:  
'T' avenge thy father basely slain,  
Mayst thou to Argos bend  
Thy weary, wand'ring foot again.  
Take from my head this vase, that high  
May swell the mournful nightly melody.

*Epode.*

The dismal song, the song of death,  
To thee, my father, will I raise,  
To thee among the shades beneath:  
So pass my mournful days.  
For thee my bleeding breast I tear,  
And beat my head, and rend my hair,  
Shorn as an off'ring to the dead:  
Yes, poor Electra beat thy head.  
As some broad-rolling stream along,  
For his lost father torn away,  
Caught in the wily net a prey,  
The tuneful cygnet pours the song;  
So thee, my father, I lament,  
In thy last bath deprived of breath,  
Stretched on the bed of death:  
So I deplore the curst intent  
Formed 'gainst thy sad return from Troy,  
The keen axe furious to destroy.  
For thee no crown thy wife designed,  
No festive wreath thy brows to bind,



But the relentless trenchant sword :  
 And, by her raging passions led,  
 Aids the base murd'rer's deed abhorred,  
 Then takes him to her bed.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

Daughter of Agamemnon, I with speed,  
 Electra, to thy rustic cottage fly :  
 For one, whose herds on these rude mountains feed,  
 A swain, on whose good faith we firm rely,  
     Came, from Mycenæ came ;  
     The Argives, thus he says, proclaim  
     Three days of festal rites divine,  
 And all the virgins haste to Juno's shrine.

ELECTRA.

*Strophe 2.*

No more, my friends, the gorgeous vest,  
 Which in her happier hours Electra graced,  
 No more the gem in gold enchased,  
 With vivid radiance sparkling on my breast,  
     Delight my mind : my feet no more  
     The mazy-winding dance shall tread,  
 No more the train of Argive virgins lead.  
     In tears, ah me ! I melt away ;  
 In tears, sad solace of each wretched day,  
     My ceaseless mis'ries I deplore.  
     My sordid toils these locks defile,  
     Around me see these vestments vile :  
 Of Agamemnon's daughter this the fate ?  
     Where now my father's royal state ?  
     Where the proud glories of his name,  
 And Troy recording sad her conqueror's mighty fame !

CHORUS.

*Antistrophe 1.*

Great is the goddess : go then, with us go ;  
 Receive whate'er thy beauties may improve,  
 The gold, the vests with various dyes that glow.

Thinkst thou with tears th' unhonoured gods to move?  
 Not won by sighs their aid,  
 But by pure vows with rev'rence paid,  
 The gods, to crush thy foes, will send,  
 And blessings on thy future days t' attend.

ELECTRA.

*Antistrophe 2.*

My cries, my vows, no god will hear,  
 Nor heeded they my father's spouting gore.  
 Ah me! the murdered I deplore,  
 And for the living exile pour the tear:  
 He, distant from his native land,  
 Wanders, poor outcast, o'er the earth,  
 And seeks mean refuge at some servile hearth,  
 Dragging from realm to realm his woes,  
 Though in his veins the blood of monarchs flows.  
 I, by oppression's iron hand  
 Driven from my father's royal seat,  
 Dwell in this low obscure retreat,  
 Here waste in toils my wretched life away,  
 Or o'er the rugged mountains stray:  
 Whilst, glorying in her impious deeds,  
 My mother to her bed the blood-stain'd murd'rer leads.

*Chorus.* The sister of thy mother, Helena,  
 Hath been the cause of many ills to Greece,  
 And to thy house.

*Electra.* Ah me! ye female train,  
 My measures I break off: some strangers, lodged  
 Nigh to the cottage, from their ambush rise.  
 Fly by the path, I to the house will fly;  
 Let us be swift t' escape their ruffian hands.

ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

*Orestes.* Stay, thou unhappy; fear not aught from me.

*Electra.* Thee, Phœbus, that I die not, I implore.

*Orestes.* Others more hated would I rather kill.

*Electra.* Away, nor touch one whom thou oughtst not touch.

*Orestes.* There is not whom more justly I may touch.

*Electra.* Why with thy sword in ambush near my house?

*Orestes.* Stay, hear; not vain thy stay thou soon shalt own.

*Electra.* I stay; the stronger thou, I in thy power.

- Orestes.* Bearing thy brother's words to thee I come.  
*Electra.* Most welcome. Breathes he yet this vital air?  
*Orestes.* He lives : I first would speak what brings thee joy.  
*Electra.* O, be thou blest for these most grateful words!  
*Orestes.* To both in common this I give to share.  
*Electra.* Where is th' unhappy outcast wand'ring now?  
*Orestes.* He wastes his life not subject to one state.  
*Electra.* Finds he with toil what life each day requires?  
*Orestes.* Not so ; but mean the wand'ring exile's state.  
*Electra.* But with what message art thou from him charged?  
*Orestes.* T' inquire, if living, where thou bearst thy griefs.  
*Electra.* First, then, observe my thin and wasted state.  
*Orestes.* Wasted with grief, so that I pity thee.  
*Electra.* Behold my head, its crisped honours shorn.  
*Orestes.* Mourning thy brother or thy father dead?  
*Electra.* What can be dearer to my soul than these?  
*Orestes.* Alas ! What deemst thou are thy brother's thoughts?  
*Electra.* He, though far distant, is most dear to me.  
*Orestes.* Why here thy dwelling from the city far?  
*Electra.* O stranger, in base nuptials I am joined.  
*Orestes.* I feel thy brother's grief. To one of rank?  
*Electra.* Not as my father once to place me hoped.  
*Orestes.* That hearing I may tell thy brother ; speak.  
*Electra.* This is his house : in this I dwell remote.  
*Orestes.* This house some digger or some herdsman suits.  
*Electra.* Generous, though poor, in reverence me he holds.  
*Orestes.* To thee what reverence doth thy husband pay?  
*Electra.* He never hath presumed t' approach my bed.  
*Orestes.* Through sacred chastity, or from disdain?  
*Electra.* Scorning my noble parents to disgrace.  
*Orestes.* How in such nuptials feels he not a pride?  
*Electra.* Him, who affied me, not my lord he deems.  
*Orestes.* Thinking Orestes might revenge the wrong?  
*Electra.* This too he fears ; yet modest is his mind.  
*Orestes.* A generous man, and one who merits much.  
*Electra.* If to his house the absent e'er returns.  
*Orestes.* But this debasement could thy mother brook?  
*Electra.* Their husbands, not their children, wives regard.  
*Orestes.* Why did Ægisthus offer this base wrong?  
*Electra.* Thus placing me, he wished my children weak.  
*Orestes.* That from thee no avengers might arise.  
*Electra.* For this design may vengeance on him fall.

*Orestes.* That yet thou art a virgin doth he know?

*Electra.* He knows it not. This undisclosed we hold.

*Orestes.* Are these, who hear us, faithful, and thy friends?

*Electra.* Never thy words or mine will they disclose.

*Orestes.* What should Orestes do, if he return?

*Electra.* Canst thou ask this? How base. The time now calls——

*Orestes.* But how thy father's murtherers should he slay?

*Electra.* Daring to do what they, who slew him, dared.

*Orestes.* Couldst thou, with him, thy mother bear to kill!

*Electra.* With the same axe, by which my father fell.

*Orestes.* This may I tell him, and thy soul resolved?

*Electra.* My mother's blood first shedding, might I die!

*Orestes.* O, were Orestes nigh, to hear these words!

*Electra.* If seen, I should not know him, stranger, now.

*Orestes.* No wonder, for when parted both were young.

*Electra.* Nor by my friends, save one, would he be known.

*Orestes.* Who bore him, as they say, by stealth from death?

*Electra.* The aged guardian of my father's youth.

*Orestes.* Was thy dead father honoured with a tomb?

*Electra.* As he was honoured, from the house cast forth.

*Orestes.* Alas the barbarous deed! A sense of ills,  
Which strangers suffer, wounds the human heart.

But speak, that to thy brother I may bear,

By thee informed, words which perchance may wound

His ear, but which concerns him much to know.

Those, who have knowledge, feel the tender touch

Of pity, not th' unknowing; yet to know

Too much is oft the bitter source of grief.

*Chorus.* My soul is with the same desire inflamed.

For, from the city distant, nought I know

Of the ills there; I wish to be informed.

*Electra.* I would speak, if I might; and to a friend

May I not speak my suffering father's wrongs,

And mine? But, stranger, since to this discourse

Thou dost enforce me, I conjure thee tell

Orestes his calamities, and mine.

Tell him in what mean garb thou seest me clad,

How sordid, and beneath what lowly roof,

Born as I was to royalty, I lodge.

I, labouring at the loom the lengthened robe,

Shall want the vest to clothe my nakedness:

And, bearing water from the flowing fount,  
 No more partaker of the feast, no more  
 Myself a virgin, 'midst the virgin train  
 Leading the dance, to them I bid adieu;  
 To Castor also bid adieu, to whom,  
 Ere to the gods advanced, I was betrothed,  
 As from the same illustrious lineage sprung.  
 Meantime my mother 'midst the Phrygian spoils  
 Sits on her throne, the Asiatic dames,  
 Made by my father's conquest slaves, attend  
 Her state, their rich Idaean vests confined  
 With clasps of gold, my father's clodded gore  
 Yet putrid in the house; and the same car,  
 In which my father rode, his murderer mounts  
 The sceptre, ensign of his kingly sway  
 O'er Greece in arms confederate, he with pride  
 Grasps in his bloody hands. The monarch's tomb  
 Unhonoured nor libations hath received,  
 Nor myrtle bough; no hallowed ornament  
 Hath dignified the pyre. Inflamed with wine  
 My mother's husband, the illustrious lord,  
 For so they call him, tramples on the earth  
 Insultingly where Agamemnon lies;  
 And hurling 'gainst his monument a stone,  
 Thus taunts us with proud scorn: "Where is thy son,  
 Orestes where? Right noble is thy tomb  
 Protected by his presence." Thus he mocks  
 The absent: but, O stranger, tell him this,  
 Suppliant I beg thee. Many give the charge,  
 And I interpret it; my hands, my tongue,  
 My mind desponding with its grief, my head  
 Shorn of its tresses, and his father. Shame,  
 Base shame it were if, when his father's arm  
 Subdued the Trojans, he should want the power  
 Alone to hurl his vengeance on one man,  
 Now in youth's prime, and from a nobler sire.  
*Chorus.* But see, the man, thy husband, to his toils  
 Giving a respite, hastens to his house.

AUTURGUS, ELECTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

*Autur.* Ha! who these strangers, whom before my doors  
 I see? Why come they to these rustic gates?

Of me aught want they? With young men to stand  
Abroad, a woman's honour ill beseems.

*Electra.* Thou faithful friend, let no suspicion touch  
Thy mind : their converse truly shalt thou know.  
These by Orestes charged, are come to me.  
Strangers, forgive what he hath said amiss.

*Autur.* What say they? Lives he? Is he yet a man?

*Electra.* He lives, they say, and speak what wins my faith.

*Autur.* Remembers he his father, and thy wrongs?

*Electra.* This lives in hope : an exile's state is weak.

*Autur.* What from Orestes come they to relate?

*Electra.* He sent them secret to observe my ills.

*Autur.* Some they behold, and some thou mayst relate.

*Electra.* They know them, of each circumstance informed.

*Autur.* Then long ago my lowly doors to them  
Should have been opened. Enter ye the house ;  
And for your welcome tidings you shall share  
Such hospitable viands as the stores  
Of my poor mansion yield. You, who attend,  
What for their journey needful they have brought  
Bear in : nor you refuse ; for you are come  
Friends to a friendly man ; poor though I am,  
A sordid spirit never will I show.

*Orestes.* Now by the gods, is this the man who holds  
Thy marriage in such holy reverence,  
Scorning to do Orestes shameful wrong?

*Electra.* The poor Electra's husband this is called.

*Orestes.* Nature hath giv'n no outward mark to note  
The generous mind : the qualities of men  
To sense are indistinct. I oft have seen  
One of no worth a noble father shame,  
And from vile parents worthy children spring,  
Meanness oft grov'ling in the rich man's mind,  
And oft exalted spirits in the poor.  
How then discerning shall we judge aright?  
By riches? Ill would they abide the test ;  
By poverty? On poverty awaits  
This ill, through want it prompts to sordid deeds ;  
Shall we pronounce by arms? But who can judge,  
By looking on the spear, the dauntless heart?  
Such judgment is fallacious ; for this man,  
Nor great among the Argives, nor elate

With the proud honours of his house, his rank  
 Plebeian, hath approved his liberal heart.  
 Will you not then learn wisdom, you whose minds  
 Error with false presentments leads astray?  
 Will you not learn by manners and by deeds  
 To judge the noble? Such discharge their trust  
 With honour to the state, and to their house:  
 Mere flesh, without a spirit, is no more  
 Than statues in the forum: nor in war  
 Doth the strong arm the dang'rous shock abide  
 More than the weak: on nature this depends,  
 And an intrepid mind. But we accept  
 Thy hospitable kindness: for the son  
 Of Agamemnon, for whose sake we come,  
 Present or not, is worthy: to this house  
 Go, my attendants; I must enter it:  
 This man, though poor, more cheerful than the rich  
 Receives me; to his kindness thanks are due.  
 More would it joy me if thy brother, blest  
 Himself, could lead me to his prosperous house;  
 Yet haply he may come; th' oracular voice  
 Of Phœbus firmly will be ratified:  
 Lightly of human prophecies I deem.

[ORESTES and his attendants enter the house.]

*Chorus.* Ne'er till this hour, Electra, were our hearts  
 So warmed with joy: for fortune now perchance,  
 Though slow in her advance, may firmly stand.

*Electra.* Why, thou unhappy, of thy humble house  
 Knowing the penury, wouldst thou receive  
 Such guests, of rank superior to thine own?

*Autor.* Why not? If they are noble, so their port  
 Denotes them, will they not alike enjoy  
 Contentment, be their viands mean or rich?

*Electra.* Since thou hast done what suits not thy low state,  
 To my loved father's aged guardian go;  
 He near the river Tanus, which divides  
 The realms of Argos from the Spartan land,  
 An outcast from the city, leads his herds;  
 Entreat him to attend thee to thy house,  
 Supplying what may entertain thy guests.  
 He will rejoice, presenting to the gods  
 His vows, when he shall hear the son, preserved

By him, yet lives ; for from my father's house  
We from my mother nothing should receive ;  
And bitter were the tidings, should she learn,  
What most would grieve her, that Orestes lives.

*Autur.* These words, since such thy pleasure, I will bear  
To the old man. But enter thou the house  
With speed, and all things set in order there ;  
For many things a woman, be her thoughts  
Intent, may find to form the grateful feast ;  
And in the house such plenty yet remains,  
As for one day may well supply their wants.  
Yet on such subjects when my thoughts are turned,  
I deem of wealth as having mighty power  
To give the stranger welcome, and to aid  
The body when afflicted with disease ;  
But of small moment to the daily food  
Which nature craves ; for to supply her wants  
An equal measure serves the rich and poor.

CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

Ye gallant ships, that o'er the main  
Rushed with innumerable oars,  
Dancing amidst the Nereid train  
To Troy's detested shores,  
Your dark-beaked prows, whilst wanton round  
The pipe enamoured dolphins bound,  
The son of Thetis pleased to guide  
Achilles, leaping on the strand  
(With Agamemnon's martial band),  
Where Simois rolls his tide.

*Antistrophe 1.*

The Nereids left th' Eubœan shore,  
And arms divinely bright  
For Vulcan's golden anvils bore :  
O'er Pelion's rocky height,  
O'er sacred Ossa's wood-crowned brow,  
Which shows the nymphs the plains below,  
They passed, the warlike father where  
Th' heroic son of Thetis bred,  
The pride of Greece, by glory led  
Th' Atridæ's toils to share.



*Strophe 2.*

One, who the spoils of Troy had shared,  
 I saw in Nauplia's port, and raptured hung,  
 O son of Thetis, on his tongue,  
 Whilst he the glories of thy shield declared ;  
 On its bright orb what figures rise,  
 Terrific to the Phrygian's eyes :  
 Grasping the Gorgon's head, the verge around,  
 With waving wings his sandals bound,  
 A sculptured Perseus rises o'er the main :  
 Protector of the pastured plain,  
 Hermes, the messenger of Jove,  
 Seems with the favoured chief his golden wings to move

*Antistrophe 2.*

Full in the midst the orb of day  
 In all its radiance blazes through the sky ;  
 The fiery coursers seem to fly,  
 And silent rolling o'er the ethereal way  
 The stars refulgent through the night,  
 To Hector's eyes a dreadful sight ;  
 High on the helmet Sphinxes glow in gold,  
 Who, whilst their prey their talons hold,  
 In triumph seem their barb'rous song to pour  
 The richly burnished hauberk o'er ;  
 Breathing fierce flames, with horrid speed  
 The dire Chimæra springs to seize Pirene's steed.

*Epode.*

Dreadful the blood-stained spear ; the car  
 Four coursers whirl amidst the war,  
 Behind them clouds of dust black-rising roll.  
 Such martial chiefs the monarch led ;  
 Yet by a hand accursed he bled,  
 By his wife's hand : her noble blood  
 From the rich streams of Tyndarus flowed,  
 But deeds of horror darken on her soul.  
 Yet may the gods' avenging power  
 On thee their righteous fury shower ;  
 Yet may thy neck the falchion wound,  
 Yet may I see thy blood distain the ground !

OLD TUTOR, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

*Tutor.* Where is my honoured mistress, my loved child,  
Daughter of Agamemnon, once my charge?  
Steep to her house and difficult th' ascent;  
With pain my age-enfeebled feet advance,  
Yet lab'ring onwards with bent knees I move  
To seek my friends. O daughter, for mine eyes  
Before the house behold thee, I am come,  
Bringing this tender youngling from my fold,  
These garlands, from the vases these fresh curds,  
And this small flask of old and treasured wine  
Of grateful odour; scanty the supply,  
Yet, with aught weaker if allayed, the cup  
Will yield a grateful bev'rage. Let one bear  
Into the house these presents for thy guests.  
I with these tattered vests meanwhile will wipe  
Mine eyes, for they are wet with gushing tears.

*Electra.* Why, good old man, thus wet thy tearful eyes?  
After this length of time dost thou recall  
The memory of my ills? or mourn the flight  
Of poor Orestes, or my father's fate,  
Whom, in thy hands sustaining, once thy care  
Nurtured, to thee and to thy friends in vain?

*Tutor.* In vain: but this my soul could not support;  
For to his tomb, as on the way I came,  
I turned aside, and falling on the ground,  
Alone and unobserved, indulged my tears;  
Then of the wine, brought for thy stranger guests,  
Made a libation, and around the tomb  
Placed myrtle branches; on the pyre I saw  
A sable ewe, yet fresh the victim's blood,  
And clust'ring auburn locks shorn from some head:  
I marvelled, O my child, what man had dared  
Approach the tomb, for this no Argive dares:  
Perchance with secret step thy brother came,  
And paid these honours to his father's tomb.  
But view these locks, compare them with thine own,  
Whether like thine their colour: nature loves  
In those who from one father draw their blood  
In many points a likeness to preserve.

*Electra.* Unworthy of a wise man are thy words,  
If thou canst think that to Mycenæ's realms

My brother e'er with secret step will come,  
 Fearing Ægisthus : then between our locks  
 What can th' agreement be? To manly toils  
 He in the rough palæstra hath been trained,  
 Mine by the comb are softened ; so that hence  
 Nothing may be inferred : besides, old man,  
 Tresses like-coloured often mayst thou find  
 Where not one drop of kindred blood is shared.

*Tutor.* Trace but his footsteps, mark th' impression, see  
 If of the same dimensions with thy feet.

*Electra.* How can th' impression of his foot be left  
 On hard and rocky ground? But were it so,  
 Brother and sister never can have foot  
 Of like dimensions : larger is the man's.

*Tutor.* But hath thy brother, should he come, no vest  
 Which thou wouldst know, the texture of thy hands,  
 In which, when snatched from death, he was arrayed?

*Electra.* Knowst thou not, when my brother from this land  
 Was saved, I was but young? But were his vests  
 Wrought by my hands, then, infant as he was,  
 How could he now, in his maturer age,  
 Be in the same arrayed, unless his vests  
 Grew with his person's growth? No ; at the tomb  
 Some stranger, touched with pity, sheared his locks,  
 Or native, by the tyrant's spies unmarked.

*Tutor.* Where are these strangers? I would see them : much  
 Touching thy brother wish I to inquire.

*Electra.* See, from the house with hast'ning step they come.

ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, TUTOR, CHORUS.

*Tutor.* Their port is noble : but th' exterior form  
 Oft cheats the eye ; many of noble port  
 Are base : yet will I bid the strangers hail.

*Orestes.* Hail, hoary sire ! Electra, of what friend  
 Doth chance present us the revered remains?

*Electra.* The guardian, strangers, of my father's youth

*Orestes.* Is this the man who bore thy brother hence?

*Electra.* The man who saved him this, if yet he lives.

*Orestes.* Why doth he scan me with that curious eye,  
 As if inspecting some bright impress marked  
 On silver? Some resemblance doth he trace?

*Electra.* In thee he pleased may mark my brother's years.

*Orestes.* A much-loved man. Why wheels he round me thus?

*Electra.* I too am struck with wonder, seeing this.

*Tutor.* My dear, my honoured child, address the gods

*Electra.* For what? Some absent, or some present good?

*Tutor.* To hold the treasure, which the god presents.

*Electra.* See, I address the gods: what wouldst thou say?

*Tutor.* Look now on him, my child, that dearest youth.

*Electra.* I feared before thy senses were not sound.

*Tutor.* My sense not sound, when I Orestes see!

*Electra.* Why speakest thou what all my hopes exceeds?

*Tutor.* In him beholding Agamemnon's son.

*Electra.* What mark hast thou observed, to win my faith?

*Tutor.* That scar above his eyebrow, from a fall

Imprinted deep, as in his father's house

He long ago, with thee, pursued a hind.

*Electra.* I see the mark remaining from his fall.

*Tutor.* Why the most dear delayst thou yet t' embrace

*Electra.* No longer now will I delay: the marks

By thee discovered are persuasive proofs.

O thou at length returned, beyond my hopes

Thus I embrace thee.

*Orestes.* And my arms at last

Thus fondly clasp thee.

*Electra.* This I never thought;

*Orestes.* Nor could I hope it.

*Electra.* Art thou he indeed?

*Orestes.* Alone to thee in firm alliance joined,

If well this net, my present task, I draw.

*Electra.* I am assured; or never must we more

Believe that there are gods, if impious wrongs

Triumphant over justice bear the sway.

*Chorus.* Yes, thou art come, O ling'ring day,

At length art come, and beaming bright

Showst to Mycenæ's state his glorious light,

Who, from his father's palace chased,

A wretched wand'rer long disgraced,

Cheers us with his returning ray.

Some god, some god, my royal friend,

Back our own radiant victory leads.

Raise then thy hands, and to the skies

Let for thy brother suppliant vows arise,

That, as with daring foot he treads,  
Success, success may on his steps attend.

*Orestes.* So may it be. With joy thy dear embrace  
I now receive: at length the time will come  
When it shall be repeated. But, old man,  
For opportune thy coming, tell me now  
What I shall do on the base murd'rer's head,  
And on my mother's, who impurely shares  
His nuptial bed, t' avenge my father's death.  
Have I no friend at Argos? not one left  
Benevolent? Are, with my fortunes, all  
Entirely lost? To whom shall I apply?  
Doth the night suit my purpose, or the day?  
Or which way shall I turn against my foes?

*Tutor.* Amidst thy ruined fortunes, O my son,  
Thou hast no friend. Where shall the man be found  
Prompt in a prosp'rous or an adverse state  
Alike to share? But learn this truth from me,  
For of thy friends thou wholly art bereft,  
Nor doth e'en hope remain; in thine own hand  
Now, and in fortune, thou hast all wherewith  
To gain thy father's house and regal state.

*Orestes.* What shall we do t' effect this glorious end?

*Tutor.* Ægisthus and thy mother thou must kill.

*Orestes.* For that I come: but how obtain that crown?

*Tutor.* Thou canst not enter, if thou wouldst, the walls.

*Orestes.* With guards defended, and with spear-armed hands;

*Tutor.* Ay; for he fears thee, nor untroubled sleeps.

*Orestes.* Well; let thine age some counsel then impart.

*Tutor.* Hear me; this now hath to my thought occurred.

*Orestes.* Mayst thou point out and I perceive some good!

*Tutor.* I saw Ægisthus, hither as I came.

*Orestes.* I am attentive to thee: in what place?

*Tutor.* Near to those meadows where his coursers feed.

*Orestes.* What doing? Hope arises from despair.

*Tutor.* A feast, it seems, preparing to the Nymphs.

*Orestes.* Grateful for children born, or vows for more?

*Tutor.* I know but this, the victims were prepared.

*Orestes.* With him what men? Or with his slaves alone

*Tutor.* No Argive there, but his domestic train.

*Orestes.* Is there who would discover me, if seen?

*Tutor.* No: these are slaves who never saw thy face.

*Orestes.* To me, if I prevail, they might be friends.

*Tutor.* Such the slave's nature : but this favours thee.

*Orestes.* How to his person near shall I approach ?

*Tutor.* Beneath his eye pass when the victims bleed.

*Orestes.* That way, it seems, some pastured fields are his.

*Tutor.* That he may call thee to partake the feast.

*Orestes.* A bitter guest, if so it please the gods.

*Tutor.* Then, as th' occasion points, thy measures form.

*Orestes.* Well hast thou said. But where my mother now ?

*Tutor.* At Argos ; but the feast she soon will grace.

*Orestes.* Why not together with her husband come ?

*Tutor.* Dreading the people's just reproach, she stayed.

*Orestes.* She knows then the suspicions of the state ?

*Tutor.* She does : the impious woman all abhor.

*Orestes.* How then together shall I slay them both ?

*Electra.* I will form measures for my mother's death.

*Orestes.* Fortune shall guide them to a good event.

*Electra.* May she in this be aiding to us both !

*Orestes.* It shall be so : but what dost thou devise ?

*Electra.* To Clytemnestra go, old man, and say

To a male child Electra hath giv'n birth.

*Tutor.* That she long since, or lately bore this child ?

*Electra.* Tell her the days require the lustral rites.

*Orestes.* And how thy mother's death doth this effect ?

*Electra.* Hearing my child-bed illness, she will come.

*Tutor.* She hath no tenderness for thee, my child.

*Electra.* Nay, my parturient honours she will weep.

*Tutor.* Perchance she may : but brief thy purpose speak.

*Electra.* Death, certain death awaits her, if she comes.

*Tutor.* Within these gates then let her set her feet.

*Electra.* Soon to the gates of Pluto shall she turn.

*Tutor.* Might I see this, with pleasure I would die.

*Electra.* First then, old man, conduct him to the place.

*Tutor.* The hallowed victims where Ægisthus slays ?

*Electra.* Then meet my mother, and relate my words.

*Tutor.* That she shall think them uttered by thy lips.

*Electra.* Now is thy task : by thee he first must bleed.

*Orestes.* Had I a guide, this instant would I go.

*Tutor.* Thy steps with ready zeal I will direct.

*Orestes.* God of my country, god of vengeance, Jove !

O, pity us ! Our sufferings pity claim.

*Electra.* Pity us, for our race from thee we draw

*Orestes.* And thou, whose altars at Mycenæ blaze,  
Imperial Juno, give us victory,  
If in a righteous cause we ask thy aid!

*Electra.* O, give us to avenge our father's death!

*Orestes.* And thou, my father, who beneath the earth  
Hast thy dark dwelling, through unholy deeds—  
And thou, O Earth, to whom I stretch my hands,  
Great queen—protect thy children, O protect  
Thy most dear children: come, and with thee bring  
To aid our cause, each mighty dead, that shook  
The spear with thee, and with thee conquered Troy!  
Hearst thou, so foully by my mother wronged,  
And all, the impious murderers who abhor?

*Electra.* All this, I know, my father hears; but now  
The time demands thee. Go! By thy bold hand,  
I charge thee, let the vile Ægisthus die:  
For in the fatal contest shouldst thou fall,  
My life too ends; nor say thou that I live,  
For I will plunge the sword into my throat  
This go I to prepare. If glad report  
Of thy success arrive, then all the house  
Shall echo to my joy: but shouldst thou die  
All otherwise. Thou hearst what I resolve.

*Orestes.* I know it all.

*Electra.* In this behoves thee much  
To be a man. Ye women, let your voice  
Give signal, like a flaming beacon, how  
The contest ends: I will keep watch within,  
Holding the keen sword ready in my hands;  
For never shall my body from my foes,  
If I must fall, indecent outrage bear.

CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

The Argive mountains round,  
'Mongst tales of ancient days  
From age to age recorded, this remains:  
Tuned to mellifluous lays  
Pan taught his pipe to sound,  
And as he breathed the sprightly swelling strains,  
The beauteous ram with fleece of gold,

God of shepherds on he drove.  
The herald from the rock above  
Proclaims, "Your monarch's wonders to behold,  
Wonders to sight, from which no terrors flow,  
Go, Mycenæans, to th' assembly go."  
With rev'rence they obey the call,  
And fill th' Atridæ's spacious hall.

*Antistrophe 1.*

Its gates with gold o'erlaid  
Wide oped each Argive shrine,  
And from the altars hallowed flames arise ;  
Amidst the rites divine,  
Joying the Muse to aid,  
Breathed the brisk pipe its sweet notes to the skies ;  
Accordant to the tuneful strain  
Swelled the loud-acclaiming voice,  
Now with Thyestes to rejoice :  
He, all on fire the glorious prize to gain,  
With secret love the wife of Atreus won,  
And thus the shining wonder made his own ;  
Then to th' assembly vaunting cried,  
" Mine is the rich Ram's golden pride."

*Strophe 2.*

Then, oh then, indignant Jove  
Bade the bright sun backward move,  
And the golden orb of day,  
And the morning's orient ray :  
Glaring o'er the western sky  
Hurled his ruddy lightnings fly :  
Clouds, no more to fall in rain,  
Northward roll their deep'ning train :  
Libyan Ammon's thirsty seat,  
Withered with the scorching heat,  
Feels nor showers nor heavenly dews  
Grateful moisture round diffuse.

*Antistrophe 2.*

Fame hath said (but light I hold  
What the voice of fame hath told)  
That the sun, retiring far,



Backward rolled his golden car,  
 And his vital heat withdrew,  
 Sick'ning man's bold crimes to view.  
 Mortals, when such tales they hear,  
 Tremble with a holy fear,  
 And th' offended gods adore :  
 She, this noble pair who bore,  
 Dared to murder, deed abhorred !  
 This forgot, her royal lord.

*Chorus.* Ah me, ah me ! Heard you a noise, my friends ?  
 Or doth imagination startle me  
 With vain alarms ? Not indistinct the sounds,  
 Like Jove's low-mutt'ring thunder, roll along.  
 Come from the house, revered Electra, come.

## ELECTRA, CHORUS.

*Electra.* What hath befall'n, my friends, what danger comes ?  
*Chorus.* This only know I, death is in that noise.  
*Electra.* I heard it, distant, yet it reached my ear.  
*Chorus.* The sound comes rolling from afar, yet plain.  
*Electra.* Comes from an Argive, or my friends, the groan ?  
*Chorus.* I know not : for confused the voices rise.  
*Electra.* This must to me be death ; why then delay ?  
*Chorus.* Forbear : that clear thou mayst thy fortunes know.  
*Electra.* No : we are vanquished : none with tidings comes.  
*Chorus.* They will : not light t' effect a monarch's death.

## MESSENGER, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

*Mess.* To you, ye virgins of Mycenæ, joy  
 I bring ; to all his friends my message speaks :  
 Orestes is victorious, on the ground  
 Ægisthus, Agamemnon's murd'rer, lies.  
 Behoves you then address th' immortal gods.  
*Electra.* And who art thou ? How wilt thou prove thy  
 truth ?  
*Mess.* Thy brother's servant knowst thou not in me ?  
*Electra.* O thou most welcome, through my fears I scarce  
 Distinguished thee : I recognize thee now.  
 What, is my father's hated murd'rer dead ?  
*Mess.* Twice, what thou wishest, I his death announce.  
*Chorus.* All-seeing justice, thou at length art come.

*Electra.* What was the manner of his death? How fell  
This vile son of Thyestes? I would know.

*Mess.* Departing from this house, the level road  
We entered soon, marked by the chariot-wheel  
On either side. Mycenæ's noble king  
Was there, amidst his gardens with fresh streams  
Irriguous walking, and the tender boughs  
Of myrtles, for a wreath to bind his head,  
He cropt. He saw us; he addressed us thus  
Aloud: "Hail, strangers! Who are ye, and whence,  
Come from what country?" Then Orestes said,  
"Thessalians, victims to Olympian Jove  
We, at the stream of Alpheus, go to slay."  
The king replied, "Be now my guests, and share  
The feast with me; a bullock to the Nymphs  
I sacrifice; at morn's first dawn arise,  
Then you shall go: but enter now my house."  
Thus as he spoke, he took us by the hand,  
And led us nothing loth: beneath his roof,  
Soon as we came, he bade his slaves prepare  
Baths for the strangers, that the altars nigh,  
Beside the lustral ewers, they might stand:  
Orestes then, "With lavers from the pure  
And living stream we lately have been cleansed:  
But with thy citizens these rites to share,  
If strangers are permitted, we, O king,  
Are ready, to thy hospitable feast  
Nothing averse." The converse here had end.  
Their spears, with which they guard the king, aside  
Th' attendants laid; and to their office all  
Applied their hands: some led the victim, some  
The basket bore, some raised the flames, and placed  
The cauldrons on the hearth: the house resounds.  
Thy mother's husband on the altars cast  
The salted cakes, and thus addressed his vows:  
"Ye Nymphs that haunt the rocks, these hallowed rites  
Oft let me pay, and of my royal spouse  
Now absent, both by fortune blest as now,  
And let our foes, as now, in ruin lie—"  
Thee and Orestes naming. But my lord  
Far other vows addressed, but gave his words  
No utterance, to regain his father's house.

Ægisthus then the sacrificing sword  
Took from the basket, from the bullock's front  
To cut the hair, which on the hallowed fire  
With his right hand he threw, and, as his slaves  
The victim held, beneath its shoulder plunged  
The blade; then turning to thy brother spoke:  
"Amongst her noble arts Thessalia boasts  
To rein the fiery courser, and with skill  
The victim's limbs to sever. Stranger, take  
The sharp-edged steel, and show that fame reports  
Of the Thessalians truth." The Doric blade  
Of tempered metal in his hand he grasped,  
And from his shoulders threw his graceful robe;  
Then, to assist him in the toilsome task,  
Chose Pylades, and bade the slaves retire.  
The victim's foot he held, and its white flesh,  
His hand extending, bared, and stript the hide  
Ere round the course the chariot twice could roll,  
And laid the entrails open. In his hands  
The fate-presaging parts Ægisthus took  
Inspecting: in the entrails was no lobe;  
The valves and cells the gall containing show  
Dreadful events to him that viewed them near;  
Gloomy his visage darkened. But my lord  
Asked whence his saddened aspect. He replied,  
"Stranger, some treachery from abroad I fear;  
Of mortal men Orestes most I hate,  
The son of Agamemnon. To my house  
He is a foe." "Wilt thou," replied my lord,  
"King of this state, an exile's treachery dread?  
But that, these omens leaving, we may feast,  
Give me a Phthian for this Doric blade,  
The breast asunder I will cleave." He took  
The steel, and cut. Ægisthus, yet intent,  
Parted the entrails; and as low he bowed  
His head, thy brother, rising to the stroke,  
Drove through his back the pond'rous axe, and rived  
The spinal joints. His heaving body writhed  
And quivered struggling in the pangs of death.  
The slaves beheld, and instant snatched their spears,  
Many 'gainst two contesting; but my lord  
And Pylades with dauntless courage stood

Opposed, and shook their spears. Orestes then  
Thus spoke : " I come not to this state a foe,  
Nor to my servants ; but my father's death  
I on his murd'rer have avenged. You see  
Th' unfortunate Orestes ; kill me not,  
My father's old attendants." At those words  
They all restrained their spears ; and he was known  
By one grown hoary in the royal house.  
Crowns on thy brother's head they instant placed,  
With shouts of joy. He comes, and with him  
brings

Proof of his daring, not a Gorgon's head,  
But, whom thou hatest, Ægisthus ; blood for blood,  
Bitter requital, on the dead is fall'n.

*Chorus.* Now for the dance, my friend, thy foot prepare,  
Now with joy-enraptured tread,  
Light as the hind that seems to bound in air,  
The sprightly measures lead.  
Thy brother comes, and on his brows  
A crown hath conquest placed :  
A wreath so glorious ne'er the victor graced  
Where famed Alpheüs flows.  
Come then, and with my choral train  
To Conquest raise the joyful strain.

*Electra.* O light, and thou resplendent orb of day,  
O earth, and night which I beheld before,  
Now I view freely, freely now I breathe,  
Now that Ægisthus, by whose murd'ring hand  
My father fell, is dead. Whate'er my house  
To grace the head contains, I will bring forth,  
My friends, and crown my brother's conqu'ring  
brows.

*Chorus.* Whate'er of ornament thy house contains  
Bring, to grace thy brother's head.  
My choir the dance, accorded to sweet strains  
Dear to the Muse, shall lead.  
For now our kings, whose honoured hand  
The sceptre justly swayed,  
Low in the dust th' oppressive tyrant laid,  
Again shall rule the land.  
Rise then, my voice, with cheerful cries,  
Attempered to thy triumph rise.

ELECTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

*Electra.* O glorious victor, from a father sprung  
Victorious in th' embattled fields of Troy,  
Orestes, for thy brows receive this crown.  
From the vain contest of the length'ned course  
Thou comest not, but victorious o'er thy foe,  
Ægisthus slain, by whom thy father bled,  
And I have been undone. Thou too, brave youth,  
Trained by a man most pious, in his toils  
Faithful associate, Pylades, receive  
From me this wreath ; for thine an equal share  
Of danger. Ever let me hold you blessed.

*Orestes.* First, of this glorious fortune deem the gods,  
Electra, sov'reign rulers ; then to me,  
The minister of fortune and the gods,  
Give the due praise. I come not to relate  
That I have slain Ægisthus : deeds shall speak  
For me ; a proof to all, his lifeless corse  
I bring thee : treat it as thy soul inclines :  
Cast it by rav'nous beasts to be devoured,  
Or to the birds, the children of the air,  
Fix it, impaled, a prey : the tyrant now,  
Ægisthus, is thy slave, once called thy lord.

*Electra.* Shame checks my tongue : yet something would I  
speak.

*Orestes.* What wouldst thou ? Speak : thy fears are vanished  
now.

*Electra.* I fear t' insult the dead, lest censures rise.

*Orestes.* Not one of all mankind would censure thee.

*Electra.* Hard to be pleased our city, prompt to blame.

*Orestes.* Speak what thou wouldst, my sister ; for to him  
Inexpiable enmity we bear.

*Electra.* Let me then speak ; but where shall I begin.  
Thy insults to recount ? With what conclude ?  
Or how pursue the train of my discourse ?

I never with the opening morn forbore  
To breathe my silent plaints, which to thy face  
I wished to utter, from my former fears  
If e'er I should be free : I now am free.

Now, to thee living what I wished to speak,  
I will recount. Thou hast destroyed my hopes,  
Made me an orphan, him and me bereft

Of a dear father, by no wrongs enforced.  
My mother basely wedding, thou hast slain  
The glorious leader of the Grecian arms,  
Yet never didst thou tread the fields of Troy.  
Nay, such thy folly, thou couldst hope to find  
My mother, shouldst thou wed her, nought of ill  
To thee intending : hence my father's bed  
By thee was foully wronged. But let him know  
Who with forbidden love another's wife  
Corrupts, then by necessity constrained  
Receives her as his own, should he expect  
To find that chastity preserved to him,  
Which to her former bed was not preserved,  
He must be wretched from his frustrate hope.  
And what a life of misery didst thou lead,  
Though not by thee deemed ill? Thy conscious mind  
Of thy unholy nuptials felt the guilt :  
My mother knew that she an impious man  
In thee had wedded ; and, polluted both,  
Thou hadst her fortune, she thy wickedness.  
'Mongst all the Argives, this had fame divulged,  
The man obeys the wife, and not the wife  
Her husband : shameful this, when in the house  
The woman sovereign rules, and not the man.  
And when of children speaks the public voice  
As from the mother, not the father sprung,  
To me it is unpleasing. He who weds  
A wife of higher rank and nobler blood,  
Sinks into nothing, in her splendour lost.  
This truth unknown, thy pride was most deceived,  
Thyself as great thou vauntedst, in the power  
Of riches vainly elevate ; but these  
Are nothing, their enjoyment frail and brief ;  
Nature is firm, not riches ; she remains  
For ever, and triumphant lifts her head.  
But unjust wealth, which sojourns with the base,  
Glitters for some short space, then flies away.  
To women thy demeanour I shall pass  
Unmentioned, for to speak it ill beseems  
A virgin's tongue ; yet I shall make it known  
By indistinct suggestion. Arrogance  
Swelled thy vain mind, for that the royal house

Was thine, and beauty graced thy perfect form.  
 But be not mine a husband whose fair face  
 In softness with a virgin's vies, but one  
 Of manly manners ; for the sons of such  
 By martial toils are trained to glorious deeds :  
 The beauteous only to the dance give grace.  
 Perish, thou wretch, to nothing noble formed ;  
 Such wast thou found, and vengeance on thy head  
 At length hath burst ; so perish all, that dare  
 Atrocious deeds ! Nor deem, though fair his course  
 At first, that he hath vanquished Justice ere  
 He shall have reached the goal, the end of life.

*Chorus.* His deeds were dreadful ; dreadful hath he felt  
 Your vengeance. With great power is Justice armed.

*Orestes.* So let it be. But bear this body hence,  
 My slaves ; to darkness let it be consigned ;  
 That when my mother comes, before she feels  
 The deadly stroke, she may not see the corpse.

*Electra.* Forbear ; to other subjects turn we now.

*Orestes.* What, from Mycenæ see I aid advance ?

*Electra.* This is not friendly aid ; my mother comes.

*Orestes.* As we could wish, amidst the toils she runs.

*Electra.* High on her car in splendid state she comes.

*Orestes.* What shall we do ? Our mother shall we kill ?

*Electra.* On seeing her hath pity seized thy heart ?

*Orestes.* She bore me, bred me ; her how shall I slay ?

*Electra.* As she thy noble father slew and mine.

*Orestes.* O Phœbus, wild and rash the charge thou gavst.

*Electra.* Who then are sage, if Phœbus be unwise ?

*Orestes.* The charge to kill my mother : impious deed !

*Electra.* What guilt were thine t' avenge thy father's death ?

*Orestes.* Now pure, my mother's murderer I should fly.

*Electra.* Will vengeance for thy father be a crime ?

*Orestes.* But I shall suffer for my mother's blood.

*Electra.* To whom thy father's vengeance then assign ?

*Orestes.* Like to the gods perchance some demon spoke.

*Electra.* What, from the sacred tripod ! Vain surmise.

*Orestes.* Ne'er can my reason deem this answer just.

*Electra.* Sink not, unmanned, to weak and timorous thoughts.

*Orestes.* For her then shall I spread the fatal net ?

*Electra.* In which her husband caught by thee was slain.

*Orestes.* The house I enter. Dreadful the intent :

Dreadful shall be my deeds. If such your will,  
Ye heavenly powers, so let it be; to me  
A bitter, yet a pleasing task assigned.

CLYTEMNESTRA, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

*Chorus.* Imperial mistress of the Argive realms,  
Drawing from Tyndarus thy noble birth  
And sister to th' illustrious sons of Jove,  
Who 'midst the flaming ether dwell in stars,  
By mortals lab'ring in the ocean waves  
In honour as their great preservers held,  
Hail! Equal with the gods I thee revere,  
Thy riches such, and such thy happy state;  
Thy fortune, queen, our veneration claims.

*Clytem.* First from the car, ye Trojan dames, alight;  
Then take my hand, that I too may descend.  
The temples of the gods with Phrygian spoils  
Are richly graced: these, from the land of Troy  
Selected, for the daughter which I lost,  
A small, but honourable prize, are mine.

*Electra.* And may not I, for from my father's house,  
I am an outcast slave, this wretched hut  
My mean abode, thy blest hand, mother, hold?

*Clytem.* My slaves are here: labour not thou for me.

*Electra.* Why hast thou driven me from the house a slave?  
For when the house was taken, I was seized,  
As these, an orphan of my father left.

*Clytem.* Such were the measures which thy father planned,  
Where it beseeemed him least, against his friends.  
For I will speak (though when a woman forms  
An ill opinion, from her tongue will flow  
Much bitterness) my wrongs from him received:  
These known, if for thy hatred thou hast cause,  
'Tis just that thou abhor me; but if not,  
Why this abhorrence? Me did Tyndarus  
Give to thy father, not that I should die,  
Nor my poor children: yet he led away,  
Her nuptials with Achilles the pretence,  
To Aulis led my daughter, in whose bay  
His fleet was stationed; on the altar there  
My Iphigenia, like a blooming flower,



Did he mow down. Averting hostile arms  
 That threatened desolation to the state,  
 Or for the welfare of his house, to save  
 His other children, if for many one  
 A victim he had slain, the deed had found  
 Forgiveness : but for Helena, because  
 She was a wanton, and his faithless wife  
 Her husband could not punish, for this cause  
 My daughter he destroyed ; yet for these wrongs,  
 Great as they were, I had not been enraged,  
 Nor had I slain my husband ; but he came,  
 And with him brought the raving prophetess  
 Admitted to his bed, and thus one house  
 Contained two wives. Women indeed are frail,  
 Nor other shall I speak ; but, this inferred,  
 Whene'er the husband from his honour swerves,  
 From his connubial bed estranged, the wife  
 Will imitate his manners, and obtain  
 Some other friend ; yet slander 'gainst our sex  
 Raises her voice aloud ; while those who cause  
 These trespasses, the men, no blame shall reach.  
 Had Menelaus in secret from his house  
 Been borne, ought I Orestes to have slain,  
 To save my sister's husband ? His son's death  
 How had thy father brooked ? And should not he,  
 Who slew my daughter, die ? Was I to bear  
 Patient his wrongs ? I slew him ; to that path,  
 Which only I could tread, I turned my foot,  
 Uniting with his foes ; for of his friends  
 Against him who with me would lift the sword ?  
 If, that thy father not with justice died,  
 Aught thou wouldst urge against me, freely speak.

*Electra.* What thou hast said is just ; yet shame attends  
 That justice ; for the wife, if aught she knows  
 Of sober sense, should to her husband yield  
 In all things reluctant. If thy mind  
 Dissents, nor to the measure of my speech  
 Accedes, yet let my mother her last words  
 Call to her memory ; let me freely speak.

*Clytem.* I now repeat them, nor retract, my child.

*Electra.* But, hearing, wilt thou not inflict some ill ?

*Clytem.* I will not ; but with kindness will requite.

*Electra.* Then I will speak, and preface thus my speech.  
I wish, my mother, that a better mind  
Were thine ; for excellence of form hath brought  
To thee and Helena deserved praise.  
Nature hath formed you sisters, light and vain,  
Of Castor much unworthy. She was borne  
Away, and by her own consent undone ;  
Thou hast destroyed the noblest man of Greece :  
Thy daughter's death thy pretext, thou hast slain  
Thy husband ; but so well as I none knows,  
Before it was decreed that she should die,  
Whilst from Mycenæ his departure yet  
Was recent, at the mirror didst thou form  
The graceful ringlets of thy golden hair.  
The wife, that in her husband's absence seeks  
With curious care to set her beauty forth,  
Mark as a wanton : she with nicest skill  
Would not adorn her person to appear  
Abroad, but that she is inclined to ill.  
Of all the Grecian dames didst thou alone,  
I know, rejoice, when prosperous were the arms  
Of Troy ; but when defeated, on thine eyes  
A cloud hung dark ; for never didst thou wish  
That Agamemnon should from Troy return.  
Yet glorious was th' occasion offered thee  
The strength of female virtue to display :  
Thou hadst a husband in no excellence  
Inferior to Ægisthus : and so vile  
Thy sister's conduct, thou hadst power from thence  
The highest honour to thyself to draw ;  
For in the foulness of th' example vice  
Instructive holds a mirror to the good.  
But if my father, as thou urgest, killed  
Thy daughter, how have I to thee done wrong ?  
My brother how ? Or why, when thou hadst slain  
Thy husband, didst thou not to us consign  
Our father's house, but make it the lewd scene  
Of other nuptials purchased by that prize ?  
Nor is thy husband exiled for thy son ;  
Nor hath he died for me, though, far beyond  
My sister's death, me living hath he slain.  
If blood, in righteous retribution, calls

For blood, by me behoves it thou shouldst bleed,  
 And by thy son Orestes, to avenge  
 My father: there if this was just, alike  
 Is it just here. Unwise is he, who weds,  
 Allured by riches or nobility,  
 A vicious woman: all that greatness brings  
 Must yield to that endeared domestic bliss,  
 Which on the chaste though humble bed attends.

*Chorus.* Respecting women fortune ever rules  
 In nuptials: some a source of joy I see  
 To mortals; some nor joy nor honour know.

*Clytem.* Always, my daughter, was thy nature formed  
 Fond of thy father: not unusual this:  
 Some love the men, and on their mothers some  
 With greater warmth their sweet affections place.  
 I will forgive thee: nor indeed, my child,  
 In deeds done by me do I so rejoice.  
 But do I see thee, fresh from childbirth, thus  
 Unbathed, and in these wretched vestments clad?  
 Ah, my unhappy counsels, that I urged  
 My husband 'gainst thee to a rage too harsh!

*Electra.* Too late to breathe the sigh, when thou canst give  
 No healing medicine. My father dead,  
 Why not recall thy outcast wand'ring son?

*Clytem.* I fear: my welfare I regard, not his,  
 Said to breathe vengeance for his father's death.

*Electra.* Against us why thy husband so enrage?

*Clytem.* Such is his nature: and impetuous thine.

*Electra.* My grief is great: but I will check my rage.

*Clytem.* And he no longer will be harsh to thee.

*Electra.* High his aspiring; in my nouse he dwells.

*Clytem.* Seest thou what contests thou wouldst raise  
 anew?

*Electra.* I say no more: I fear him, as I fear——

*Clytem.* Cease this discourse. My presence why required?

*Electra.* That I am late a mother thou, I ween,  
 Hast heard: make thou the sacrifice for me,  
 I have no skill, on the tenth rising morn  
 What for my son the rites require; for me,  
 This my first child, experience hath not taught.

*Clytem.* This is her task, who aided at the birth.

*Electra.* Unaided and alone I bore the child.

*Clytem.* So neighbourless, so friendless stands thy house.

*Electra.* None with the poor a friendship wish to form.

*Clytem.* Then I will go, and offer to the gods,  
 The days accomplished, for thy son. This grace  
 For thee performed, I hasten to the fields,  
 Where to the nymphs my husband now presents  
 The hallowed victim. My attendants, drive  
 These chariots hence, and lead the steeds to stalls;  
 When you imagine to the gods these rites  
 I shall have paid, again be present here:  
 My husband too behoves it me to grace.

*Electra.* Let my poor house receive thee; but take heed  
 Lest thy rich vests the black'ning smoke defiles.  
 There shalt thou sacrifice, as to the gods,  
 Behoves thee sacrifice: the basket there  
 Is for the rites prepared, and the keen blade  
 Which struck the bull: beside him shalt thou fall  
 By a like blow: in Pluto's courts his bride  
 He shall receive, with whom in heaven's fair light  
 Thy couch was shared: to thee this grace I give  
 Thou vengeance for my father shalt give me.

#### CHORUS.

##### *Strophe.*

Refluent the waves of mischief swell,  
 The forceful whirlwind veers around.  
 Then in the bath my monarch fell:  
 The roofs, the battlements resound;  
 The polished stones, that form the walls,  
 His voice re-echo, as the hero falls,  
 "Why, barb'rous woman, by thy hand,  
 After ten years of war on Phrygia's plain  
 Returned victorious to my native land,  
 Why, barb'rous woman, am I slain?"

##### *Antistrophe.*

Now Justice, for the injured bed  
 Which light Love gloried to betray,  
 Turns back with vengeance on her head,  
 Who dared her lord to slay.

Long absent in the fields of fame  
 Scarce to the high Cyclopean towers he came.  
 Eager to shed his blood she strove ;  
 With her own hand the keen-edged axe she swayed,  
 With her own hand the murd'rous weapon drove,  
 And low her hapless husband laid.

*Epode.*

Hapless to such a pest allied,  
 She, like a lioness in savage pride  
 Midst shaggy forests wild that feeds,  
 Dared such atrocious deeds.

*Clytem.* O, by the gods, my children, do not kill [With  
 Your mother !

*Chorus.* Heard you in the house her cry ?

*Clytem.* Ah me, ah me !

*Chorus.* I too lament thy fate,  
 Fall'n by thy children's hands. 'Th' avenging god  
 Dispenses justice when occasion calls.  
 Dreadful thy punishment ; but dreadful deeds,  
 Unhappy, 'gainst thy husband did'st thou dare.  
 Stained with their mother's recent-streaming blood  
 See, from the house they come, terrible proof  
 Of ruthless slaughter. Ah ! there is no house,  
 Nor hath been, with calamities oppressed,  
 More than the wretched race of Tantalus.

ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

*Orestes.* O Earth, and thou all-seeing Jove, behold  
 These bloody, these detested deeds ! In death  
 Stretched on the ground beneath my hand they lie  
 Both lie, a sad atonement for my wrongs.

*Electra.* Much to be mourned, my brother, to be mourned  
 With tears, and I the cause. Unchecked, unaware  
 I to my mother came, I boldly came  
 To her that gave me birth. Alas thy fate,  
 Thy fate, my mother ! Thou hast suffered ills,  
 And from thy children, whose remembrance time  
 Can ne'er efface, deeds ruthless, and far worse  
 Than ruthless : yet with justice hast thou paid  
 This debt to vengeance for my father's blood.

*Orestes.* O Phcebus, vengeance from thy hallowed shrine  
Didst thou command, unutterable deeds,  
But not obscure, through thee are done, from Greece  
The bloody bed removed. But to what state  
Shall I now go, what hospitable house?  
Who will receive me? Who, that fears the gods,  
Will look on me, stained with my mother's blood?

*Electra.* And whither, to what country shall I fly,  
Wretch that I am? What nuptials shall be mine?  
What husband lead me to the bridal bed?

*Orestes.* Again, again thy sober sense returns,  
Changed with the gale: thy thoughts are holy now,  
Then ruled by frenzy. To what dreadful deeds,  
O thou most dear, hast thou thy brother urged  
Reluctant? Didst thou see her, when she drew  
Her vests aside, and bared her breasts and bowed  
To earth her body, whence I drew my birth,  
Whilst in her locks my furious hand I wreathed?

*Electra.* With anguished mind, I know, thou didst proceed,  
When heard thy wailing mother's piteous cries.

*Orestes.* These words, whilst with her hand she stroked my  
cheeks,

Burst forth, "Thy pity I implore, my son:"  
Soothing she spoke, as on my cheeks she hung,  
That bloodless from my hand the sword might fall.

*Chorus.* Wretched Electra, how couldst thou sustain  
A sight like this? How bear thy mother's death,  
Seeing her thus before thine eyes expire?

*Orestes.* Holding my robe before mine eyes I raised  
The sword, and plunged it in my mother's breast.

*Electra.* I urged thee to it: I too touched the sword.

*Chorus.* Of deeds most dreadful this which thou hast done.  
Cover thy mother's body; in her robes  
Decent compose her wounded limbs.—Thou gavst  
Being to those who were to murder thee.

*Electra.* Behold my friends, and not my friends, we wrap  
Her robes around her, to our house the end  
Of mighty ills.

*Chorus.* But see, above the house  
What radiant forms appear? or are they gods  
Celestial? Mortals through th' ethereal way  
Walk not: but why to human sight disclosed?

CASTOR *and* POLLUX.

Hear, son of Agamemnon : for to thee  
 Thy mother's brothers, twin-born sons of Jove,  
 Castor, and this my brother Pollux, speak.  
 Late having calmed the ocean waves, that swelled  
 The lab'ring vessel menacing, we came  
 To Argos, where our sister we beheld,  
 Thy mother, slain. With justice vengeance falls  
 On her : in thee unholy is the deed.  
 Yet Phœbus, Phœbus—— But, my king is he,  
 I will be silent : yet, though wise, he gave  
 To thee response not wise : but I must praise  
 Perforce these things. Thou now must do what  
 Fate

And Jove decree. To Pylades affy  
 Electra ; let him lead her to his house  
 His bride : but leave thou Argos ; for its gates,  
 Thy mother slain, to thee is not allowed  
 To enter ; for the Furies, hounds of hell,  
 Will chase thee, wand'ring, and to madness whirled.  
 Go then to Athens, seat of Pallas, clasp  
 Her hallowed image : that they touch thee not  
 She o'er thy head her Gorgon shield will hold.  
 They from her dreadful dragons will start back  
 Appalled. The mount of Mars is there, where first  
 On blood the gods sate judges, when enraged  
 That by unhallowed nuptials wrong had stained  
 His daughter, Mars, to ruthless vengeance fired,  
 Slew Halirrhothius, of ocean's lord  
 The son. Most righteous from that time is held  
 The judgment there, and by the gods confirmed :  
 There thou must make appeal, this bloody deed  
 Be there decided : from the doom of blood  
 Absolved the equal numbers of the shells  
 Shall save thee that thou die not ; for the blame  
 Apollo on himself will charge, whose voice  
 Ordained thy mother's death : in future times  
 This law for ever shall be ratified,  
 The votes in equal number shall absolve.  
 At this the dreadful goddesses with grief  
 Deep-wounded through the yawning earth shall sin  
 E'en at the mount ; thence an oracular gulf

Hallowed, revered by mortals. On the banks  
 Of Alpheus, the Lycean temple near,  
 Thou must inhabit an Arcadian state.  
 And from thy name the city shall be called.  
 This I have said to thee ; but in the earth  
 The citizens of Athens shall entomb  
 The body of Ægisthus : the last rites  
 Due to thy mother Menelaus shall pay,  
 At Nauplia late from vanquished Troy arrived,  
 And Helena. From Egypt, from the house  
 Of Proteus, she returns : to Ilion's towers  
 She went not ; but, that strife and bloody war  
 'Mongst mortal men might rise, an imaged form  
 Resembling Helena Jove sent to Troy.  
 This virgin now let Pylades receive  
 His bride, and home to the Achaian land  
 Conduct her. Him, to thee in words allied,  
 To Phocis let him lead, and give him there,  
 Just to his modest virtue, ample wealth.  
 Thou to the narrow Isthmus bend thy steps,  
 Thence speed thee to the blest Cecropian state.  
 The fated doom, assigned for blood, fulfilled,  
 Thou shalt be happy, from thy toils released.

*Chorus.* O sons of Jove, may we presume t' approach,  
 And converse with you be allowed to hold ?

*Iastor.* You may ; no curse this blood derives on you.

*Irestes.* May I address you, sons of Tyndarus ?

*Iastor.* Thou mayst : to Phœbus this dire deed I charge.

*Chorus.* Gods as you are, and brothers to the slain,  
 Why from the house did not your power avert  
 This deadly ill ?

*Iastor.* The dire necessity  
 Of fate impelled it, and the voice unwise  
 Of Phœbus from his shrine.

*Electra.* But me what voice  
 Of Phœbus urged, what oracle, that I  
 The murderer of my mother should become ?

*Iastor.* Common the actions, common too the fates.  
 One demon, hostile to your parents, rent  
 The hearts of both.

*Irestes.* For such a length of time  
 Not seen, loved sister, am I torn so soon



From thy dear converse, leaving thee so soon,  
And left?

*Castor.* She hath a husband, and a house,  
Nor suffers aught severe, save that she leaves  
The Argive state.

*Orestes.* And what severer woe  
Can rend the anguished heart, than to be driv'n  
An outcast from our country? I must leave  
My father's house, and for my mother's blood  
The sentence passed by foreign laws abide.

*Castor.* Resume thy courage: to the sacred seat  
Of Pallas shalt thou come; be firm, endure.

*Electra.* O my loved brother, clasp, O clasp my breast  
Close to thy breast. For from our father's house  
A mother's curse hath torn us, dreadful curse!

*Orestes.* Thus let me clasp thee: o'er me, as now dead,  
As o'er my tomb thy lamentations pour.

*Castor.* Ah, thou hast uttered sorrows e'en to gods  
Mournful to hear. In me, in heaven's high powers  
Is pity for the woes of mortal men.

*Orestes.* I shall no more behold thee.

*Electra.* And no more  
Shall I come near thy sight.

*Orestes.* No more with thee  
Shall I hold converse: this my last address.

*Electra.* Farewell, Mycenæ! And you, virgins, born  
In the same state with me, farewell, farewell!

*Orestes.* O thou most faithful, dost thou go e'en now?

*Electra.* I go; but dew my softened eyes with tears.

*Orestes.* Go, Pylades, go thou with joy, and wed  
Electra.

*Castor.* Them the nuptial rites await.  
Haste thou to Athens, fly these hounds of hell;  
For 'gainst thee they their hideous steps advance,  
Gloomy and dark, their hands with serpents armed,  
Rejoicing in the dreadful pains they give.  
To the Sicilian sea with speed we go,  
To save the vessels lab'ring in the waves.  
But to the impious through th' ethereal tract  
We no assistance bring. But, those to whom  
Justice and sanctity of life is dear,  
We from their dang'rous toils relieve, and save.

Let no one then unjustly will to act,  
Nor in one vessel with the perjured sail;  
A god to mortals this monition gives.

*Chorus.* Oh, be you blest! And those, to whom is giv'n  
Calmly the course of mortal life to pass  
By no affliction sunk, pronounce we blest.

## ORESTES

### PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ELECTRA.  
HELENA.  
ORESTES.  
MENELAUS.  
TYNDARUS.

PYLADES.  
MESSENGER.  
PHRYGIAN SLAVE.  
CHORUS OF ARGIVE VIRGINS

#### ELECTRA.

THERE is not in the stores of angry heaven  
Aught terrible, affliction or distress,  
But miserable man bears its full weight.  
E'en Tantalus, the son of Jove, the blest  
(Not to malign his fate), hangs in the air  
And trembles at the rock, which o'er his head  
Projects its threat'ning mass; a punishment  
They say, for that to heaven's high feast admitted,  
A mortal equal with th' immortals graced,  
He curbed not the intemperance of his tongue;  
The sire of Pelops he, of Atreus this,  
For whom the Fates weaving a diadem  
Wove discord with the thread, to kindle war  
Betwixt the brothers, Atreus and Thyestes.  
But why recite things horrible to tell?  
Him Atreus feasted, having slain his sons.  
From Atreus (may oblivion hide the rest)  
Th' illustrious Agamemnon, if illustrious,  
And Menelaus had birth; Aërope  
Of Crete their mother. Menelaus espoused  
The fatal Helen, by the gods abhorred.  
Th' imperial Agamemnon wooed the bed  
Of Clytemnestra, memorable to Greece;  
From her three daughters sprung, Chrysothemis  
And Iphigenia, and myself Electra,  
One son, Orestes, from this wicked mother,  
Who in th' inextricable robe entangled  
Her husband murdered, for a cause which ill

Becomes a virgin's modest lips t' unfold.  
Th' injustice of Apollo must I blame?  
Orestes he commands to slay his mother,  
Nor bears to all the glory of the deed.  
Not disobedient to the god he slew her.  
I had my share, such as a woman might,  
And Pylades assisted in the act.  
Since then the poor Orestes pines away  
Impaired with cruel sickness; on his bed  
He lies; his mother's blood to frenzy whirls  
His tortured sense: th' avenging powers, that haunt  
His soul with terrors thus, I dare not name.  
The sixth day this, since on the hallowed pile  
My slaughtered mother purged her stains away.  
No food hath passed his lips, no bath refreshed  
His limbs; but in his garments covered close,  
When his severe disease abates a little,  
He melts in tears; and sometimes from his couch  
Starts furious, like a colt burst from his yoke.  
Meantime the state of Argos hath decreed  
That shelt'ring roof, and fire, and conference  
Be interdicted to us matricides.  
And this decisive day the states pronounce  
Our doom, to die crushed with o'erwhelming stones,  
Or by th' avenging sword plunged in our breasts.  
Yet have we one small ray of bright'ning hope,  
Hope that we die not; for from Troy returned  
After long wand'rings Menelaus arrives,  
His vessels in the Nauplian harbour moored,  
And to this strand impels his eager oar;  
But the woe-working Helen in the shades  
Of shelt'ring night, lest some, whose sons were slain  
Beneath the walls of Troy, seeing her walk  
In day's fair light, with vengeful rage might rise,  
And crush the shining mischief, first he lands,  
And sends her to our house: there now she is,  
Weeping her sister's fate and our afflictions.  
Yet 'midst her grief this comfort she enjoys,  
Hermione, her virgin daughter, whom  
At Sparta, when she sailed for Troy, she left,  
The father to my mother's care consigned;  
In her delighted she forgets her woes.

But my quick eye glances to each access,  
 If Menelaus advancing I might see.  
 Weak help from others, if not saved by him :  
 The house of the unhappy hath no friend.

ELECTRA, HELENA.

*Helena.* Daughter of Clytemnestra and the chief  
 That drew from Atreus his illustrious birth,  
 Virgin of ripest years, how is it, say,  
 With thee, unhappy, and the wretch Orestes,  
 Who in his mother's blood imbrued his hands?  
 With thee conversing I am not polluted,  
 Charging the crime on Phœbus. Yet I mourn  
 My sister's fate ; for since I sailed to Troy,  
 Urged to that madness by th' offended gods,  
 These eyes have not beheld her ; yet, her loss  
 Deploring, at her fortunes drop the tear.

*Electra.* Why should I tell thee what thine eyes behold,  
 The race of Agamemnon in distress?  
 Myself attendant on th' unhappy dead,  
 But that he breathes a little he is dead.  
 Sit sleepless : yet reproach I not his ills.  
 But thou art happy, happy is thy husband ;  
 To us in our calamities ye come.

*Helena.* How long on this sick-bed hath he been laid?

*Electra.* E'er since he shed her blood who gave him breath.

*Helena.* Ah, wretch ! Ah, wretched mother thus to perish !

*Electra.* Such our lost state I sink beneath our ills.

*Helena.* Do me one grace I beg thee by the gods.

*Electra.* As watching at my brother's couch I may.

*Helena.* Wilt thou go for me to my sister's tomb?

*Electra.* My mother's dost thou mean ? And wherefore go?

*Helena.* These locks and my libations to present.

*Electra.* What hinders but thou visit thy friend's tomb?

*Helena.* And show me to the Grecians ? Shame forbids.

*Electra.* Too late discreet ; when shameless from thy  
 house——

*Helena.* Just is thy censure, but not friendly to me.

*Electra.* And at Mycenæ dost thou feel this shame?

*Helena.* I dread the fathers, whose sons died at Troy.

*Electra.* Against thee loud the voice of Argos cries.

*Helena.* Oblige me then, and free me from this fear.

*Electra.* I could not look upon my mother's tomb.

*Helena.* To send these offerings by a slave were shame.

*Electra.* Hermione, thy daughter, why not send?

*Helena.* A virgin 'midst the crowd! Indecent this.

*Electra.* The favours of the dead, who trained her youth  
With fond affection, thus she might repay.

*Helena.* 'Tis justly urged: I will obey thee, virgin,  
And send my daughter; for thy words are wise.  
Hermione, come hither: to the tomb  
Of Clytemnestra these libations bear,  
And these my locks; there pour this honied bowl  
Foaming with milk and wine; on the high mound,  
Addressing thus the dead, "These hallowed gifts  
Helen, thy sister, offers, who through fear  
Approaches not thy tomb, dreading the crowd  
Of Argos." Bid her be propitious to us,  
To me, to thee, my husband, and these two,  
These wretched two, whom Phœbus hath undone.  
Then promise all that to a sister's shade  
A sister should bestow: go, my child, haste,  
Present these gifts; then speed thy quick return.

*Electra.* O nature, in the bad how great an ill! [*Alone.*]  
But in the virtuous strong thy power to save.  
See, she hath shorn th' extremity of her locks,  
Anxious of beauty, the same woman still!  
May the gods hate thee, as thou hast ruined me,  
And him, and universal Greece!—Ah me,  
My loved companions come, whose friendly grief  
Attunes their sad notes to my mournful strains.  
He sleeps now; they will wake him, and my  
eyes  
Will melt in tears, when I behold him rave.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

*Electra.* Dearest of women, softly set your feet,  
Not to be heard; gently advance; no noise.  
Kind is your friendship: but t' awake him now  
From this sweet rest would be a grief to me.

*Chorus.* Silence, silence! Softly tread:  
Nor foot be heard, nor sound, nor noise.

*Electra.* This way far, far from the bed.

*Chorus.* I obey.

*Electra.* Hush, let thy voice

Steal on my ear

Soft as the whispers of the breathing reed.

*Chorus.* Soft as the whispers of the breathing reed  
My voice shall steal upon thy ear.

*Electra.* Ay, thus, low, low ; softly come near ;

Come softly, friends, and tell me why

This visit. A long sleep hath closed his eye.

*Chorus.* Doth hope then brighten on his ill ?

*Electra.* Alas, what hope ? Behold him lie ;  
He breathes, a little breathes, and still  
Heaves at short intervals a sigh.

*Chorus.* Unhappy state !

*Electra.* Death were it, should you, as thus loud you weep,  
Fright from his eyelids the sweet joys of sleep.

*Chorus.* Yet wail I his unhappy state,  
Abhorred deeds of deadly hate,  
Rage of vindictive, tort'ring woes,  
Which the relentless powers of heaven impose.

*Electra.* Unjust, unjust the stern command,  
The stern command Apollo gave  
From Themis' seat, his ruthless hand  
In blood, in mother's blood to lave.

*Chorus.* Ah, turn thine eye.

He stirs, he moves, rolled in the cov'ring vest.

*Electra.* Wretch, thy rude clamours have disturbed his  
rest.

*Chorus.* And yet I think sleep locks his eye.

*Electra.* Wilt thou be gone ? hence wilt thou fly,  
That quiet here again may dwell ?

*Chorus.* Again composed he sleeps again.

*Electra.* 'Tis well,

*Chorus.* Awful queen, whose gentle power  
Brings sweet oblivion of our woes,  
And in the calm and silent hour  
Distils the blessings of repose,  
Come awful Night,  
Come from the gloom of Erebus profound,  
And spread thy sable-tinctured wings around ;  
Speed to this royal house thy flight ;  
For pale-eyed Grief, and wild Affright,

And all the horrors of Despair,  
Here pour their rage, and threaten ruin here.

*Electra.* Softly let your warblings flow ;  
Further, a further distance keep ;  
The far-off cadence sweet and low  
Charms his repose, and aids his sleep.

*Chorus.* Tell us, what end  
Awaits his mis'ries ?

*Electra.* Death : that end I fear.  
He tastes no food.

*Chorus.* Death then indeed, and near.

*Electra.* When Phœbus gave the dire command  
To bathe in mother's blood his hand,  
By whom the father sunk in dust,  
He doomed us victims.

*Chorus.* Dire these deeds, but just.

*Electra.* She slew, she died.—Thy hand abhorred.  
In dust my bleeding father laid :  
And for thy blood, in vengeance poured,  
We perish, perish as the dead.  
The shadowy train  
Thou joinest : but my life shall waste away  
In tears the night, in sighs and groans the day.  
But, ah ! to whom shall I complain !  
Nor child nor husband soothes my pain :  
For ever drag I my distress,  
Sigh, mourn, and weep in lonely wretchedness.

*Chorus.* Go nearer, royal virgin ; nearer view him,  
That under this soft sleep the sleep of death  
Deceive thee not : I like not this still rest.

#### ORESTES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

*Orestes.* O gentle Sleep, whose lenient power thus soothes  
Disease and pain, how sweet thy visit to me,  
Who wanted thy soft aid ! Blessing divine,  
That to the wretched givest wished repose,  
Steeping their senses in forgetfulness !—  
Where have I been ! Where am I ? How brought  
hither ?

My late distraction blots remembrance out.

*Electra.* My most dear brother, oh, what heartfelt joy



- To see thee lie composed in gentle sleep!  
Wilt thou I touch thee? Shall I raise thee up?
- Orestes.* Assist me then, assist me; from my mouth  
Wipe off this clotted foam; wipe my moist eyes.
- Electra.* Delightful office, for a sister's hand  
To minister relief to a sick brother.
- Orestes.* Lie by my side, and from my face remove  
These squalid locks; they blind my darkened eyes.
- Electra.* How tangled are the ringlets of thy hair,  
Wild and disordered through this long neglect.
- Orestes.* Pray lay me down again: when this ill frenzy  
Leaves me, I am very feeble, very faint.
- Electra.* There, there: the bed is grateful to the sick,  
A mournful, but a necessary tenure.
- Orestes.* Raise me again; more upright; bend me forward.
- Chorus.* The sick are wayward through their restlessness.
- Electra.* Or wilt thou try with slow steps on the ground  
To fix thy feet? Variety is sweet.
- Orestes.* Most willingly: it hath the show of health;  
The seeming hath some good, though void of truth.
- Electra.* Now, my loved brother, hear me, whilst the Furies  
Permit thy sense thus clear and undisturbed.
- Orestes.* Has thou aught new? If good, I thank thee for it;  
If ill, I have enough of ill already.
- Electra.* Thy father's brother, Menelaus, arrives;  
His fleet rides anchored in the Nauplian bay.
- Orestes.* Comes he then? Light on our afflictions dawns:  
Much to my father's kindness doth he owe.
- Electra.* He comes; and, to confirm what now I say,  
Brings Helena from Ilium's ruined walls.
- Orestes.* More to be envied, were he saved alone;  
Bringing his wife, he brings a mighty ill.
- Electra.* The female line of Tyndarus was born  
To deep disgrace, and infamous through Greece.
- Orestes.* Be thou unlike them then; 'tis in thy power;  
And further than in words thy virtue prove.
- Electra.* Alas, my brother, wildly rolls thine eye;  
So quickly changed! the frenetic fit returns.
- Orestes.* Ah, mother! Do not set thy Furies on me.  
See, how their fiery eyeballs glare in blood,  
And wreathing snakes hiss in their horrid hair!  
There, there they stand, ready to leap upon me.

*Electra.* Rest thee, poor brother, rest thee on thy bed ;  
Thou seest them not ; 'tis fancy's coinage all.

*Orestes.* O Phœbus, they will kill me, these dire forms,  
These Gorgon-visaged ministers of hell !

*Electra.* Thus will I hold thee, round thee throw mine arms,  
And check th' unhappy force of thy wild starts.

*Orestes.* Off, let me go ! I know thee, who thou art,  
One of the Furies ; and thou grapplest with me,  
To whirl me into Tartarus. Avaunt !

*Electra.* What shall I do ? Ah me, where shall I seek  
Assistance, since th' unfriendly god frowns on us !

*Orestes.* Bring me the bow of horn which Phœbus gave me,  
And with it bade me drive these fiends away,  
Should they affright me with their madd'ning terrors.

*Electra.* Shall any god by mortal hands be wounded ?

*Orestes.* Should she not instant vanish from my sight.  
Heard you the clang ? Saw you the winged shaft  
Bound from the distant-wounding bow ? Ha, ha !  
Here yet ! On swift wings mount th' ethereal air,  
And there impeach the oracle of Phœbus.—  
Whence this disquiet ? Why thus pants my breath ?  
Ah, whither am I wandered from my bed ?

For from the storm the high-swoln waves subside.

Why dost thou weep, my sister ? Why decline  
Thy drooping head, and hide it in thy vest ?

I blush to give thee part in my disease,  
And wound with grief thy virgin tenderness.

Let not my ills be thus infectious to thee ;

Thou barely didst assent ; I did the deed,  
I shed her blood. But Phœbus I must blame,

Who urged me to this most unholy act ;

Then, save with soothing words, assist me not.

Had these eyes seen my father, had I asked him  
In duty if I ought to slay my mother,

I think he would have prayed me not to plunge

My murdering sword in her that gave me birth ;

Since he could not revisit heaven's sweet light,

And I must suffer all these miseries.

But now unveil thy face and dry thy tears,

My sister, though afflictions press us sore :

And when thou seest me in these fitful moods,

Soothe my disordered sense, and let thy voice

Speak peace to my distraction ; when the sigh  
 Swells in thy bosom, 'tis a brother's part  
 With tender sympathy to calm thy griefs ;  
 These are the pleasing offices of friends.  
 But to thy chamber go, afflicted maid,  
 There seek repose, close thy long-sleepless eyes,  
 With food refresh thee, and th' enlivening bath.  
 Shouldst thou forsake me, or with too close tendance  
 Impair thy delicate and tender health,  
 Then were I lost indeed ; for thou alone,  
 Abandoned as I am, art all my comfort.

*Electra.* Should I forsake thee ! No ; my choice is fixed  
 And I will die with thee, or with thee live,  
 Indifferent for myself ; for shouldst thou die,  
 What refuge shall a lonely virgin find,  
 Her brother lost, her father lost, her friends  
 All melted from her ?—Yet, if such thy wish,  
 I ought t' obey : recline thee on thy couch,  
 Nor let these visionary terrors fright thee ;  
 There rest ; though all be fancy's coinage wild,  
 Yet Nature sinks beneath the violent toil.

#### CHORUS.

##### *Strophe.*

Awful powers, whose rapid flight  
 Bears you from the realms of night  
 To hearts that groan, and eyes that weep,  
 Where you joyless orgies keep,  
 Ye gloomy powers, that shake the affrighted air,  
 And armed with your tremendous rod,  
     Dealing terror, woe, despair,  
     Punish murder, punish blood,  
 For Agamemnon's race this strain,  
 This supplicating strain, I pour ;  
 No more afflict his soul with pain,  
 Nor torture him with madness more :  
     Breathe oblivion o'er his woes,  
     Leave him, leave him to repose.  
 Unhappy youth, what toils are thine,  
 Since Phœbus from his central shrine

Bade thee unsheath th' avenging sword,  
And Fate confirmed th' irrevocable word!

*Antistrophe.*

Here us, king of gods, O hear,  
Where is soft-eyed Pity, where?  
Whence, to plunge thee thus in woes,  
Discord stained with gore arose?  
What vengeful Demon thus with footstep dread,  
Trampling the blood-polluted ground,  
Sternly cruel joys to spread  
Horror, rage, and madness round?  
Woe, woe is me! In man's frail state  
Nor height nor greatness firm abides:  
On the calm sea secure of fate,  
Her sails all spread, the vessel rides:  
Now th' impetuous whirlwinds sweep,  
Roars the storm, and swells the deep,  
Till with the furious tempest tost  
She sinks in surging billows lost.  
Yet firm their fate will I embrace,  
And still revere this heaven-descended race.

*Chorus.* But see, the royal Menelaus advances:  
That awe-commanding and majestic port  
Denotes him of the race of Tantalus.—  
Illustrious leader of a thousand ships,  
That bore to Asia's strand thy martial host,  
All hail! Good fortune guides thee, and the gods,  
Fav'ring thy vows, have blessed thy conqu'ring arms.

MENELAUS, ORESTES, CHORUS.

*Mene.* From Troy returned, with pleasure I behold  
This royal house, with pleasure mixed with grief:  
For never saw I house encompassed round  
With such afflictions. Agamemnon's fate,  
How by his wife he perished, I long since  
At Malea learned, when rising from the waves  
Confessed to open view the sailors' prophet,  
Unerring Glaucus, the dire bath disclosed,

The wife, and each sad circumstance of blood;  
A tale, that harrowed up my soul with grief,  
And wrung the tear from the stern veteran's eye.  
But to the Nauplian coast arrived, my wife  
First landed, when I hoped with joy to fold  
Orestes and his mother in my arms,  
As happy now, a wave-washed fisherman  
Told me that Clytemnestra is no more,  
Slain by th' unholy sword. But, virgins, say  
Where is Orestes, who these horrid ills  
Hath dared? For when the war called me to Troy,  
An infant in his mother's arms I left him,  
That now, if seen, his form would be unknown.

*Orestes.* He whom thou seekst am I: I am Orestes.

To thee, O king, will I unfold my woes,  
And willingly: but first I grasp thy knees,  
And pour my plain unornamented prayer:  
Save me; for thou 'midst my distress art come.

*Mene.* Ye powers of heaven, what do mine eyes behold?  
One from the regions of the dead returned!

*Orestes.* Well hast thou said: I view the light indeed,  
But do not live; such are my miseries.

*Mene.* How wild, how horrid hangs thy matted hair!

*Orestes.* The real, not th' apparent, racks my soul.

*Mene.* Thy shrunk and hollow eye glares dreadfully.

*Orestes.* My whole frame wastes; nought, save my name, is  
left.

*Mene.* Reason revolts at this thy squalid form.

*Orestes.* Alas, I am the murderer of my mother.

*Mene.* I have heard it: spare mine ear the tale of woe.

*Orestes.* I will: yet heaven is rich in woes to me.

*Mene.* What are thy sufferings? What disease consumes thee?

*Orestes.* Conscience: the conscious guilt of horrid deeds,

*Mene.* How sayst thou? Wisdom suffers when obscure.

*Orestes.* A pining melancholy most consumes me.

*Mene.* Dreadful its power, but not immedicable.

*Orestes.* And frenzy, fierce t' avenge my mother's blood.

*Mene.* When did its rage first seize thee? What the day?

*Orestes.* The day I raised my hapless mother's tomb.

*Mene.* What, in the house, or sitting at the pyre?

*Orestes.* By night, as from rude hands I guard her bones.

*Mene.* Was any present, to support thy weakness?

*Orestes.* My Pylades, who aided in her death.

*Mene.* What phantoms frighten thy disordered sense?

*Orestes.* Three virgin forms I see gloomy as night.

*Mene.* Whom thy words mark I know, but will not name.

*Orestes.* Awful they are: forbear irreverent words.

*Mene.* And do these haunt thee for thy mother's blood?

*Orestes.* Ah wretched me, how dreadful their pursuit!

*Mene.* Thus dreadful sufferings dreadful deeds attend.

*Orestes.* Yet have we where to charge our miseries.

*Mene.* Name not thy father's death; that were unwise.

*Orestes.* Phœbus, by whose command I slew my mother.

*Mene.* Of right and justice ignorant, I ween.

*Orestes.* We to the gods submit, whate'er they are.

*Mene.* And doth not Phœbus in thine ills protect thee?

*Orestes.* Not yet: delays attend the powers divine.

*Mene.* How long then since thy mother breathed her last?

*Orestes.* This the sixth day; the funeral pile yet warm.

*Mene.* How soon thy mother's blood these powers avenge?

*Orestes.* Unwisely said: though true, unkind to friends.

*Mene.* What then avails to have avenged thy father?

*Orestes.* Nought yet. Delay is as a deed not done.

*Mene.* In what light does the city view thy deeds?

*Orestes.* They hate us, so that none hold conference with us.

*Mene.* Hast thou yet purified thy hands from blood?

*Orestes.* Where'er I go, each house is barred against me.

*Mene.* What citizens thus drive thee from the land?

*Orestes.* Cæax, through ranc'rous malice to my father.

*Mene.* On the avenging Palamedes' death?

*Orestes.* I wrought it not. But three pursue my ruin.

*Mene.* The others who? Some of Ægisthus' friends?

*Orestes.* They hurt me most, whose power now sways the state.

*Mene.* Commit they not the sceptre to thy hands?

*Orestes.* They, who no longer suffer us to live!

*Mene.* How acting? What thou art assured of speak.

*Orestes.* Sentence against us will this day be given.

*Mene.* Of exile? or to die? or not to die?

*Orestes.* To die, with stones crushed by our citizens.

*Mene.* Why fliest thou not far from this country's bounds?

*Orestes.* On every side we are enclosed with arms.

*Mene.* By private foes, or by the Argive state?

*Orestes.* By the whole state: in brief, that I may die.

*Mene.* Wretch, thou hast reached misfortune's dire extreme.

*Orestes.* In thee is all my hope, in thee my refuge:

Happy to us afflicted art thou come;  
Share with thy friends that happiness, alone  
Enjoy not all the good thou hast received;  
In our afflictions bear a friendly part.  
Think how my father loved thee, and requite  
That love to us: it will become thee well:  
They have the name of friends, but not the worth,  
Who are not friends in our calamities.

*Chorus.* But see, the Spartan Tyndarus this way

Directs his aged feet, in sable weeds,  
His locks, in grief for his dead daughter, shorn.

*Orestes.* Ah me! He comes indeed, whose presence most

Fills me with shame for what I have misdone.  
I was his darling once; my infant age  
With tenderness he nursed, caressed me, bore  
The child of Agamemnon in his arms,  
And loved me like the twin-born sons of Jove:  
Nor Leda less. And is it thus, my soul,  
Thus, O my bleeding heart, that I requite  
Their ill-paid love! Ah, cover me, ye shades,  
Ye clouds, with friendly darkness wrap me round,  
And hide me from the terrors of his eye!

TYNDARUS, MENELAUS, ORESTES, CHORUS.

*Tynd.* Where shall I see my daughter's husband, where

Find Menelaus? At Clytemnestra's tomb,  
Libations as I poured, I heard that he,  
With Helen, after all these tedious years,  
Is safely in the Nauplian port arrived.

O lead me; for I long to grasp his hand,  
To feast mine eyes after this length of years,  
And welcome to our shores the man I love.

*Mene.* Hail, reverend sharer of the bed with Jove!

*Tynd.* With joy thy greeting I return, my son.

Ah, not to know the future, what an ill!  
Hateful to me this murd'rous dragon here  
Glares pestilential lightnings from his eyes.

Wilt thou hold conference with th' unhallowed wretch?

*Mene.* And wherefore not? His father was my friend.

*Tynd.* From such a father sprung a son so vile?

*Mene.* He did ; to be respected, though unhappy.

*Tynd.* Barb'rous thy manners, 'mongst barbarians learned.

*Mene.* Nay, Greece enjoins respect to kindred blood.

*Tynd.* And not to wish to be above the laws.

*Mene.* Necessity is to the wise a law.

*Tynd.* Enjoy it thou ; I will have none of it.

*Mene.* Wisdom approves not anger in thy years.

*Tynd.* What ! Is the contest then of wisdom with him ?

If virtuous and dishonourable deeds

Are plain to all, who more unwise than he ?

Deaf to the call of justice he infringed

The firm authority of the public laws :

For when beneath my daughter's murd'ring axe

Th' imperial Agamemnon bowed his head,

A horrid deed, which never shall I praise,

He ought t' have called the laws, the righteous laws,

T' avenge the blood, and by appeal to them

Have driven his mother from this royal house :

Thus 'midst his ills calm reason had borne rule,

Justice had held its course, and he been righteous.

But the same Fury, which had seized his mother,

Had now seized him ; and with ungoverned rage,

Justly abhorrent of her impious deed,

He did a deed more impious, slew his mother.

For, let me ask thee, should the faithless wife

Bathe in the husband's blood her murd'rous hands,

And should th' avenging son the mother slay,

His son again retaliate blood for blood,

What bound shall the progressive mischief know ?

The wisdom of our ancestors ordained

That he, who had the guilt of blood upon him,

Be not allowed the sight, the walks of men,

By banishment atoning, not by death :

Else one must always be to death devote,

Who hath the last pollution on his hands.

But these vile women doth my soul abhor,

And her, my daughter, first, who slew her lord :

Thy Helen too I never will commend,

Never hold converse with her ; no, nor thee

Can I approve, who for a worthless woman

In toilsome march hast trod the fields of Troy.

Yet to my power will I support the laws,



And check this savage, blood-polluted rage,  
Which spreads wild havoc o'er th' unpeopled land  
Hadst thou the feelings of humanity,  
Wretch, when thy mother cried to thee for mercy,  
And bared her breast to thy relentless view?  
I saw it not, that scene of misery,  
Yet the soft tear melts from my aged eye.  
One thing confirms my words: the gods abhor,  
With madness scourge thee, and with terrors haunt,  
Vindictive of thy guilt. What need I hear  
From other witness what mine eyes behold?  
Now, Menelaus, I warn thee, mark me well:  
Do not, protecting him, oppose the gods,  
But leave him to the vengeance of the state,  
Or never set thy foot on Sparta's shore.  
My daughter by her death hath rightly paid  
The debt to justice: but from him that death  
Was most unjust. O, happy had I been,  
Had I no daughters: there I am a wretch!

*Chorus.* Happy his state, who, in his children blest,  
Hath not there felt affliction's deepest wound.

*Orestes.* In reverence to thy age I dread to speak  
What I well know must pierce thy heart with grief.  
I am unholy in my mother's death,  
But holy, as my father I avenged.  
The veneration due to those grey hairs  
Strikes me with awe: else I could urge my plea  
Freely and boldly; but thy years dismay me.  
What could I do? Let fact be weighed with fact.  
My father was the author of my being;  
Thy daughter brought me forth: he gave me life,  
Which she but fostered: to the higher cause  
A higher reverence then I deemed was due.  
Thy daughter, for I dare not call her mother,  
Forsook her royal bed for a rank sty  
Of secret and adulterous lust: on me  
The word reflects disgrace, yet I must speak it.  
Ægisthus was this private paramour:  
Him first I slew, then sacrificed my mother:  
An impious deed; but I avenged my father.  
Thou threatenst the just vengeance of the state:  
Hear me: deserve I not the thanks of Greece?

Should wives with ruffian boldness kill their husbands,

Then fly for refuge to their sons, and think,  
Baring their breast, to captivate their pity,  
These deeds would pass for nothing, as the mood,  
For something or for nothing, shall incline them.  
This complot have I broke, by doing what  
Thy pompous language styles atrocious deeds.  
My soul abhorred my mother, and I slew her,  
Who, when her lord was absent, and in arms  
To glorious conquest led the sons of Greece,  
Betrayed him, with pollution stained his bed ;  
And, conscious of her guilt, sought not t' atone it,  
But, to escape his righteous vengeance, poured  
Destruction on his head, and killed my father.  
Now by the gods, though in a charge of blood  
Ill it becomes me to invoke the gods,  
Had I in silence tamely borne her deeds,  
Would not the murdered, justly hating me,  
Have roused the Furies to torment my soul ?  
Or hath she only her assisting fiends,  
And he no fav'ring power t' avenge his wrongs ?  
Thou, when to that bad daughter thou gavst birth,  
Didst give me ruin ; for through her bold crime  
I lost my father, and my mother slew.  
Seest thou Ulysses' wife ? Telemachus  
Shed not her blood ; for she, unstained with vice,  
Guards her chaste bed with spotless sanctity.  
Seest thou Apollo, who to mortal ears  
Sounds from his central cave the voice of truth ?  
Him we obey in all that he commands :  
Obeying his commands, I slew my mother ;  
Drag him then to your bar, put him to death ;  
The guilt is his, not mine. What should I do ?  
The guilt on him transferred, is not the god  
Sufficient to absolve me ? Where shall man  
Find refuge, if the god, at whose command  
I did it, will not now save me from death ?  
Then say not that these deeds were done not well,  
But to the doers most unhappily.  
If well accorded, the connubial state  
From all its strings speaks perfect harmony ;

- If ill, at home, abroad, the harsh notes jar,  
 And with rude discord wound the ear of Peace.
- Chorus.* That Peace to wound always our sex was born,  
 Augmenting by our ills the ills of men.
- Tynd.* What, dost thou brave me, and in proud defiance  
 So answer, as to pierce my heart with grief?  
 This pride will fire me more to urge thy death.  
 One honest task I'll add to that which drew me  
 Hither, to grace my murdered daughter's tomb:  
 This instant to th' assembled Argives go,  
 And rouse the willing state, an easy task,  
 To crush thee, and thy sister: she deserves,  
 E'en more than thou, to die, whose accursed tongue  
 Added new fierceness to thy fierce intents,  
 Thine ears assailing with some bitter speech,  
 That Agamemnon's shade haunted her dreams,  
 That the tremendous powers below abhorred  
 Th' adulterous bed, foul e'en to man's gross sense,  
 Till all this house blazed in the flames she kindled.  
 I tell thee, Menelaus, and I will do it,  
 If thou regard my hate, or my alliance,  
 Protect him not, by the just gods I charge thee,  
 But leave him to the rigour of the laws,  
 Or never dare to tread on Spartan ground.  
 Hear me, and mark me: league not with the vile,  
 Nor scorn thy friends, whose breasts with virtue glow.  
 Here, my attendants, lead me from this house.

ORESTES, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

- Orestes.* Why get thee gone, that I may plead to him,  
 Uninterrupted by the wayward age.—  
 Why dost thou bend that way, then backward turn,  
 Thoughtful thy step, absorbed in anxious care?
- Mene.* Forbear, and leave me to my thoughts, perplexed  
 And unresolved which cause I should espouse.
- Orestes.* Suspend awhile thy judgment; hear me first,  
 First hear my plea; weigh it, and then resolve.
- Mene.* Speak; thou hast reason. Wisdom sometimes loves  
 To dwell with silence, sometimes woos the ear.
- Orestes.* Then let me urge my plea; and, oh! forgive me  
 If I seem tedious: grief is fond of words.

Give me not aught of thine, only return  
What from my father's grace thou hast received.  
I ask not thy rich treasures, yet a treasure  
Richer than all thy stores : I ask my life.  
Is this unjust ? Let me from thee receive  
Something unjust : such Agamemnon was,  
Who led to Troy th' united arms of Greece :  
Yet was the wrong not his ; but to avenge  
Thy wife's incontinent and foul offence.  
For all his dangers, all his toils in war,  
Borne as becomes a friend, in a friend's cause,  
Give me one day for his ten years in arms :  
To vindicate thy honour, one short day  
Stand firm, my friend, the guardian of my life.  
For thee at Aulis my poor sister died ;  
I am content, nor ask Hermione  
A sacrifice for me. In my distress  
Protect me, pity me ; I ask no more.  
To my unhappy father grant my life,  
And save my sister, save her virgin years.  
The house of Agamemnon sinks with me.  
Impossible thou'lt say : " When danger threatens,  
The friend comes forth resolved, and shields his friend :  
In fortune's golden smiles what need of friends ?  
Her fav'ring power wants no auxiliary.  
Greece sees thou lov'st thy wife." I speak not this  
In flattery, to wind into thy bosom ;  
But I conjure thee by that love—Ah me !  
How am I fall'n ! Not for myself alone  
I pour my prayer, but for my father's house.  
Now by the kindred blood, whose royal tide  
Rolls in thy veins ; by each endearing tie  
Of fond relation and fraternal love,  
Think that my murdered father's injured shade  
Burst from the realms of death, and hovers o'er thee ;  
And think, oh, think the words I speak are his.  
'Tis for my life I plead, life's dear to all,  
With sighs, with groans, with tears : save me, oh, save  
me !

*Chorus.* Low at thy knees a woman joins her prayer ;  
Oh, save them, save th' unhappy, for thou canst !  
*Mene.* I hold thee dear, Orestes, and am willing

To give my friendly aid in thy distress ;  
 Th' affinity of blood calls loudly on us  
 To share its toils, if the gods grant the power,  
 Nor shrink appalled at danger or at death ;  
 And much I wish the gods would grant this power ;  
 But with a thousand toils oppressed I come,  
 And lift a single spear, whose glitt'ring point  
 No squadrons follow wedged in firm array ;  
 Few my remaining friends, and small my force.  
 With Argos then should we engage in arms,  
 We could not conquer ; but with gentle words  
 Perchance we may : this way Hope smiles on us  
 Who would with feeble forces aim at deeds  
 Of perilous proof ? 'Twere folly to attempt it.  
 When roused to rage the madd'ning populace storms,  
 Their fury, like a rolling flame, bursts forth  
 Unquenchable ; but give its violence way,  
 It spends itself, and as its force abates  
 Learns to obey, and yields it to your will :  
 Their passions varying thus, now rough with rage,  
 Now melting with soft pity, Wisdom marks  
 The change, and turns it to a rich account.  
 Thus Tyndarus I will move, and th' Argive state,  
 To use their supreme power with gentleness.  
 The gallant bark, that too much swells her sails,  
 Oft is o'erset, but let her pride be lowered,  
 She rides secure, and glories in the gale.  
 Impetuous rage is hateful to the gods,  
 Hateful to men : with cool unpassioned reason  
 (Discretion guides my words) I must preserve thee,  
 And not, as thou perchance mayst deem, by force ;  
 Against the stronger what can force avail ?  
 Its trophies can my single spear erect  
 Victorious o'er the ills that now assault thee ?  
 To be a suitor hath not been my use  
 At Argos, but Necessity will teach us,  
 If wise, submission to the power of Fortune.

ORESTES, CHORUS.

*Orestes.* Thou doughty champion of thy wife, good else  
 For nought, in thy friend's cause a coward base,

Thus dost thou slight me, turn thee thus away?  
 Are Agamemnon's favours thus repaid?  
 Thou hadst no friend, my father, in thy ills.  
 Ah me! I am betrayed; e'en Hope forsakes me,  
 And leaves me unprotected to my fate,  
 Who on his shelt'ring power alone relied.—  
 But from his Phocians, see, with hasty step  
 Here comes a friend indeed, my Pylades!  
 A pleasing sight: for in distress a friend  
 Comes like a calm to the tossed mariner.

PYLADES, ORESTES, CHORUS.

*Pylades.* With swift pace speed I through the city, hearing  
 Their counsels, and discerning their intents  
 T' adjudge thee and thy sister to quick death.  
 But what! How fares my friend? What thy design?  
 Thou partner of my soul, companion dear,  
 Friend, kinsman, brother: thou art all to me.

*Orestes.* To speak my woes in brief then, we are lost.

*Pylades.* Then in thy ruin is thy friend involved.

*Orestes.* The Spartan views us with malignant eye.

*Pylades.* A vile wife to a husband matched as vile.

*Orestes.* To me no joy doth his arrival bring.

*Pylades.* Is he indeed then at this land arrived?

*Orestes.* Late, but soon found unfaithful to his friends.

*Pylades.* And brought he his disloyal wife with him?

*Orestes.* In truth he brought not her, but she brought him.

*Pylades.* Where is this pest, that hath unpeopled Greece?

*Orestes.* Here in my house, if I may call it mine.

*Pylades.* What to thy father's brother didst thou say?

*Orestes.* Not to see me and my poor sister slain.

*Pylades.* Now, by the gods, what answer did he give?

*Orestes.* Timid and cautious, like a faithless friend.

*Pylades.* With what excuses his denial cloked?

*Orestes.* The father of these female worthies came.

*Pylades.* Incensed and chafing for his daughter's death?

*Orestes.* E'en so; for him my father was disdained.

*Pylades.* And wants he courage here t' assert thy cause?

*Orestes.* No warrior he, but among women brave.

*Pylades.* Then have thy woes their full weight; thou must die.

*Orestes.* First the deciding vote must pass against us.

*Pylades.* Deciding what? I tremble as I ask.

*Orestes.* Or life or death. Few words speak great events.

*Pylades.* Fly then, and with thy sister leave this house.

*Orestes.* Seest thou the guards that close their weapons round?

*Pylades.* Each street I saw, each pass secured with arms.

*Orestes.* We are invested, like a sea-girt town.

*Pylades.* Mine also is misfortune, ruin mine.

*Orestes.* Ruin! From whence? Thy ills augment my woes.

*Pylades.* My father in his rage hath banished me.

*Orestes.* What, on some public, or a private charge?

*Pylades.* As impious, aiding in thy mother's death.

*Orestes.* Unhappy, shalt thou suffer in my ills?

*Pylades.* I shall not, like the Spartan, shrink from them.

*Orestes.* Like mine, should Argos meditate thy death!

*Pylades.* They have no right; I am no subject here.

*Orestes.* The many, when bad rulers prompt to ill,  
Regard no rights.

*Pylades.* But when good lead to good,  
Their counsels well advised breathe temperate wisdom.

*Orestes.* Well, be it so. But shall we now consult  
Our common good?

*Pylades.* Propose th' important theme.

*Orestes.* To urge my plea before them.

*Pylades.* Vindicate

Thy deed as righteous?

*Orestes.* Righteous, as avenging  
My father's blood.

*Pylades.* Harshly, I fear, their brows  
Will frown upon thee.

*Orestes.* Should fear hold me mute,  
And yield me tame to death?

*Pylades.* Unmanly that.

*Orestes.* What should I do?

*Pylades.* Hast thou, remaining here,  
Prospect of safety?

*Orestes.* Safety dwells not here.

*Pylades.* In going hast thou hope?

*Orestes.* Should it take well,  
It might succeed.

*Pylades.* Attempt it boldly then;

Go: if to die, 'tis nobler to die there.

*Orestes.* My cause is just.

*Pylades.* Would heaven they so may think !

*Orestes.* Thus I avoid the charge of guilty fear.  
Some one, indignant at my father's death,  
Perchance may pity me.

*Pylades.* I see it all,  
And the bright lustre thy high birth throws round thee.

*Orestes.* I will not stay, and like a coward slave  
Die tamely here.

*Pylades.* I praise thy noble spirit.

*Orestes.* But to my sister shall we make this known ?

*Pylades.* No, I conjure thee.

*Orestes.* She would be all tears

*Pylades.* Avoid the omen then ; in silence go ;  
Nor let her grief unseasonably detain thee.

*Orestes.* Yet one distress afflicts me ; should the Furies  
Rouse all their terrors, and affright my soul.

*Pylades.* My care shall watch around thee.

*Orestes.* To attend  
A man disordered thus, to guard, to hold him,  
Is an unpleasing office.

*Pylades.* But for thee  
Delightful to my love.

*Orestes.* Yet have a care  
Lest my contagious frenzy seize on thee.

*Pylades.* No more of frenzy.

*Orestes.* Wilt thou not be shocked  
At this hard task ?

*Pylades.* No office shocks a friend.

*Orestes.* Be thou my pilot then.

*Pylades.* A welcome charge

*Orestes.* And guide my footsteps to my father's tomb  
That I may pour my supplications there,  
And move his shade to aid me.

*Pylades.* Pious this,  
And just.

*Orestes.* But from my mother's lead me far :  
Let me not see it.

*Pylades.* All is hostile there.  
But haste thee, ere the fatal vote be passed.  
Lean on me, let me throw my arm around thee,  
Thus hold thee, thus support thy feeble limbs,  
And bear thee through the crowd of gazing eyes



Regardless. Where shall friendship show its faith,  
If now in thy afflictions I forsake thee?

*Orestes.* This is to have a friend : compared to this  
What are the ties of blood? The man who melts  
With social sympathy, though not allied,  
Is than a thousand kinsmen of more worth.

CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

Th' exalted state, th' imperial power,  
Which spread o'er Greece its ample sway,  
And, girt with war, on the barbaric shore  
Taught the proud streams of Simois to obey,  
Withdraw their glories. Discord (as of old  
Fierce 'midst the sons of Tantalus she rose,  
And for the rich ram fleeced with gold  
Prepared the feast of horrid woes,  
Whence Vengeance bared the flaming sword,  
And blood for blood remorseless poured)  
Now through the house of Atreus lords it wide,  
And filled with carnage swells her sanguine pride.

*Antistrophe.*

Honour is honour now no more,  
Since with fierce rage he dared invade  
His parent's breast, and, his hand stained with gore,  
Waved to the golden sun his crimson blade.  
Ill actions are displeasing to the skies,  
And moon-eyed Polly marks them for her own.  
Heardst thou not Clytemnestra's cries,  
Her thrilling shrieks, her dying moan?  
"The mother by the son to bleed!  
Ah, dare not: 'tis an impious deed:  
Nor, in wild rev'rence to thy father's name,  
Blot with eternal infamy thy fame!"

*Epode.*

Is there in all heaven's angry store  
Misfortune, sorrow, sickness, pain,

Is there an ill that racks, that tortures more  
Than by th' unpitied son the parent slain?  
Ah spare, unhappy youth, thy mother spare!—  
'Tis done: like vultures see the Furies rise,  
And rend his soul with wild despair:  
See how he rolls his haggard eyes!  
When from her gold-embroidered vest  
Suppliant she bared her heaving breast,  
Ah, couldst thou strike?—He struck.—O deed abhorred!  
And ruthless in her bosom plunged the sword.

## ELECTRA, CHORUS.

*Electra.* Ye virgins, hath the poor Orestes, struck  
With madness from the gods, rushed from the house?  
*Chorus.* Not so; but to th' assembled state of Argos  
He goes, resolved to strive in this hard contest,  
Where life to him and thee, or death's the prize.  
*Electra.* Ah me, what hath he done? Who counselled this?  
*Chorus.* Pylades. But this messenger will tell thee  
All that hath passed touching thy brother there.

## MESSENGER, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

*Mess.* Unhappy daughter of that mighty chief,  
Who led the powers of Greece, revered Electra,  
How shall my tongue disclose this tale of woe?  
*Electra.* Ah me! We are no more. Thy faltering voice  
In broken accents speaks the tragic tale.  
*Mess.* Even so: the fatal sentence is pronounced.  
This day thy brother and thyself must die.  
*Electra.* Long have my fears, presaging this event,  
With mournful expectation sunk my heart.  
But was there no debate? Whose ruling voice  
Procured this sentence? Tell me, good old man,  
Arm they their hands with stones? Or by the sword  
Together sink we in one common death?  
*Mess.* I left my rural cottage, and the gates  
Of Argos entered, with fond wish to learn  
To thee and to Orestes what had chanced,  
Prompted by that high reverence which I bore  
Thy father; for his house supported me,  
Though poor, yet not unfaithful. Soon I saw

The thronging people hurry to that height  
 Where, as they say, Ægyptus gave them seats  
 When Danaus was adjudged to punishment.  
 Astonished at the sight, I asked if war  
 New threat'ning roused the city thus : an Argive  
 Gave answer, "Seest thou not Orestes there?  
 He goes to plead his cause ; and life or death  
 Hangs on his voice." I looked, and near me saw—  
 O piteous spectacle !—what least I hoped  
 To see, thy brother : as he walked, his eyes  
 Fixed on the ground, his fever-weakened limbs,  
 Supported by his friend, whose faithful care,  
 Touched with like grief, guided his feeble steps.  
 Soon as th' assembly sate, the herald's voice  
 Proclaimed free speech to all who willed to speak,  
 Whether Orestes for his mother slain  
 Should die, or not. Talthybius first arose,  
 Who with thy father stormed the towers of Troy ;  
 Double and dark his speech, as one who lives  
 The slave of greatness : to thy father high  
 Respect he paid, but to thy brother's praise  
 Silent, in honourable terms involved  
 His ill intent, as that he modelled laws  
 'Gainst parents not becoming : but his eye  
 Always glanced cheerful on Ægisthus' friends :  
 For such their nature ; the warm shine of fortune  
 Allures them, vassals to the rich and great.  
 Next rose the royal Diomedé : his voice  
 Allowed not death, but exile, to atone  
 The deed. Discordant clamours echoed round,  
 As approbation prompted or dislike.  
 An Argive, not an Argive, next arose,  
 His birth barbaric, of licentious tongue,  
 Presumptuous, turbulent, and prompt to lead  
 With empty noise the populace to ill :  
 For the smooth tongue, that charms to mischief, bears  
 A pestilent power ; whilst Wisdom, aiming still  
 At virtue, brings its honourable thought,  
 Though late, to glorious issue. Her grave voice  
 Authority, that owes its best grace to it,  
 Should countenance, and check the factious tongue.  
 This wretch, suborned by Tyndarus, clamoured loud

For death, the harshest death, involving thee  
In the same ruin. But another rose  
Of different sentiment ; no sightly gaud,  
But one in whose plain form the eye might note  
A manly, free, direct integrity,  
Tempered with prudence : one who rarely joined  
The city circles, in his small domain,  
Which his own culturing hand had taught to smile,  
Passing in honest peace his blameless days.  
His voice to Agamemnon's son decreed  
A crown, his noble father who avenged  
By slaying that abandoned impious woman,  
Whose vile deeds checked the soldier's generous  
flame ;

For who in distant fields, at honour's call,  
Would wield his martial arms, if in his absence  
Pollution stain his wife, and his pure bed  
Be made a foul sty of adulterous lust ?  
The virtuous all approved. Orestes now,  
Preventing further argument, advanced,  
And thus addressed them : " Ye illustrious Argives,  
Who from a line of ancient heroes draw  
Your high-born race, to vindicate your honour,  
Not less than to avenge my father's death,  
I did this deed ! For should the husband's blood  
Leave on the wife's hand no foul stain, full soon  
The purple tide would flow, or you must sink—  
O shame to manhood !—vile slaves to your wives.  
Now she, that to my father's bed was false,  
Hath died for it. If you require my life,  
The law hath lost its force ; and who shall say  
His own life is secure, as these bold deeds  
From frequency draw force and mock at justice ?"  
These truths were lost in air ; and that vile talker,  
Whose malice called for death to both, prevailed.  
Harsh was the sentence, and th' unhappy youth  
Scarce gained this sad indulgence, leave to die  
By his own hand this day. Thou too must die.  
Him from th' assembly Pylades with tears  
Leads this way, by a few, a faithful few,  
Accompanied, whose eyes, melting with pity  
Rain bitter dew. He comes, a dismal sight

To pierce thy soul with grief. But haste, prepare  
 The sword: thou too must die: thy high-born race  
 Avails not, nor the Oracle of Phœbus,  
 Whose fatal answer brings destruction on you.

*Chorus.* Why, miserable virgin, dost thou bend  
 Thy clouded eye to th' earth? Why silent thus?  
 Give thy griefs voice, and let thy sorrows flow.

ELECTRA.

*Strophe.*

Yes, I will let my sorrows flow,  
 And give to grief the melancholy strain,  
 And, as the mournful notes complain  
 With all the heartfelt agony of woe,  
 These hands my bleeding cheeks shall tear,  
 And beat this head in wild despair,  
 Devoted to the queen, that rules beneath  
 The realms of darkness and of death.  
 Daughters of Argos, with loud shrieks deplore  
 The house of Atreus, now no more.  
 Fall'n, by too severe a fate,  
 From the proud glories of its splendid state.

*Antistrophe.*

Low, low they lie, th' imperial line,  
 Th' imperial race of Pelops vanished, gone;  
 No trace remains, no name, no son;  
 Their vaunted honours in the dust decline.  
 From envious gods these ruins come,  
 And the harsh city's bloody doom.  
 Short is the day of life, each little hour  
 With toils, with mis'ries clouded o'er;  
 Should bright'ning hope, to cheer the troubled day,  
 Pour through the gloom a transient ray,  
 Fate comes, and o'er the darkened scene  
 Spreads the deep horrors of its dreary reign.

*Epode.*

Oh for an eagle's wing, whose rapid flight  
 Might bear me to th' ethereal height,  
 Where to Olympus fixed the golden chain

Suspends the pond'rous, trembling mass :  
There should my woe-wild notes complain  
To the hoar author of my race.  
From Tantalus our lineage springs,  
A mighty race of sceptred kings :  
Great as they are, around them wait  
The vengeful ministers of fate ;  
Since Pelops, with impetuous force,  
Lashed his proud steeds, and urged their fiery course ;  
And as the bounding wheels they bore  
Along Geræstus' rock-rough shore,  
Saw Myrtilus extended there,  
Hurled headlong from the rapid car ;  
With gloomy joy he smiled, and gave  
The mangled limbs to stain the foaming wave.  
To Atreus thence pernicious came  
From Maia's son the fatal Ram,  
Who gave his golden fleece to shine  
Destructive, a destructive sign.  
Hence, Discord, hence thy horrid deeds  
Startled the sun's indignant steeds ;  
Back to the East they wing their way,  
And meet the Morn's affrighted ray ;  
The Pleiads, hast'ning to advance,  
Start back, and change their sevenfold dance  
Hence false Aërope in honeyed smiles  
Concealed her wanton, ruinous wiles ;  
Hence to Thyestes' horrid feast  
Came slaughter, a tremendous guest ;  
And, her hand reeking with my father's blood,  
Draws from my heart the purple flood.

*Chorus.* But see thy brother, by the Argive state  
Condemned to bleed, advances slow ; and with him  
The faithful Pylades, with a brother's love,  
Shares in his griefs, and guides his feeble steps.

ELECTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

*Electra.* Ah me, my brother ! Whilst I yet behold thee  
Let me indulge my grief, ere yet the tomb,  
Yet ere the solemn pyre in its black shade

Wraps our dead limbs, let me indulge my grief,  
My frenetic grief; fix my fond eyes upon thee,  
That never, never must behold thee more.

*Orestes.* Wilt thou not cease these womanish wallings, meet  
This harsh decree with silence, and abide,  
Firmly abide the rigour of our fate?

*Electra.* Can I be silent, when our eyes no more  
Shall see yon golden sun's irradiate light?

*Orestes.* Kill me not thou; forbear! Enough of death  
Have I already from the hands of Argos.

*Electra.* Thy youth I mourn, and thy untimely death;  
Life was thy due, when, ah! thou art no more.

*Orestes.* Now by the gods, throw not this softness round me,  
Nor make th' unmanly tear drop at our woes.

*Electra.* We die; and shall the tear not flow? That dew  
Pity will shed o'er the lost joys of life.

*Orestes.* This day must we needs die; prepare we then  
The sword, or other instrument of death.

*Electra.* My brother, do thou kill me; let no Argive  
Touch with his rude hand Agamemnon's daughter.

*Orestes.* No: in thy mother's blood I have enough;  
I shed not thine; but by thy own hand die.

*Electra.* I will; and not desert thy honest sword.  
But let me throw my fond arms round thy neck.

*Orestes.* Vain is the joy, if yet it be a joy,  
In death to soothe thee with a last embrace.

*Electra.* My brother! O that dearest, best-loved name,  
Dear to thy sister, partner of my soul!

*Orestes.* Why wilt thou melt me thus? And yet I wish,  
Returning thy embrace, to fold thee close,  
Close in my arms; nor modesty forbids;  
It is my sister. Let me clasp thee then,  
And press thee to my bosom, fondly press thee.  
This sweet exchange of love is all our woes  
Allow us for the names of wedded joys.

*Electra.* Oh, may the same sword end us, the same tomb  
Close in its cedar hearsement our cold limbs!

*Orestes.* That would be joy; but destitute of friends  
Who shall inurn us in one common tomb?

*Electra.* Did Menelaus my father then betray?

Did not the wretch plead earnest for thy life?

*Orestes.* He durst not show his false eye; but, his hopes

Fixed on the sceptre, feared to save his friends.  
But let us in our death give shining proof  
Of our illustrious birth ; my hand shall show  
My high nobility, and plunge the sword  
Intrepid through my breast : dare thou the like.  
Thou, Pylades, be umpire of our death ;  
With decent care compose our breathless limbs,  
And lay them in my father's sepulchre.  
Farewell ! I go to execute the deed.

*Pylades.* Yet stay ; one charge against thee must I bring,  
Shouldst thou but hope I would survive thy death.

*Orestes.* And what avails it that thou die with me ?

*Pylades.* Without thy converse what can life avail ?

*Orestes.* Thou hast not slain thy mother : I slew mine.

*Pylades.* I shared the deed : the suffering I should share.

*Orestes.* Oh, save thee for thy father ; die not with me :

Thou hast a country ; that name's lost to me :  
Thou hast a father's house, hast greatness, wealth.  
If this ill-fated maid, whom to thy arms,  
The sanction of our friendship, I betrothed—  
If she be lost, some other nuptial bed  
Awaits to bless thee with a father's joys.  
Our dear relation is no more : my friend,  
Thou, whose sweet converse was my soul's delight,  
Farewell ! For thee the joys of life remain ;  
To us they wither in the shade of death.

*Pylades.* Wide from my honest purpose dost thou stray.

May not the fertile earth, nor the bright air  
Receive my blood, if ever I forsake thee,  
To spare myself if ever I forsake thee.  
Together I designed, together wrought  
Thy mother's death, which draws this fate on thee :  
Together will I die with thee, and her :  
Dear to my soul, affianced to my bed,  
I deem her as my wife. Should I return  
To Delphi, the high citadel of Phocis,  
Dare I name honour, if united thus,  
Whilst fortune favoured your high state, but now  
The false friend shrink from your adversity ?  
Not so : these things demand my deep regard.  
Yet, ere we die, some measures let us form  
T' afflict with grief the heart of Menelaus.



- Orestes.* Let me see that, my friend, then let me die!
- Pylades.* Be then advised, and let the keen sword wait.
- Orestes.* Shall then my just revenge burst on his head?
- Pylades.* No more: these women; I distrust their faith.
- Orestes.* They are all truth, all friendship; fear them not.
- Pylades.* Let us slay Helen: that would grieve his soul.
- Orestes.* How? I approve it, be it nobly done.
- Pylades.* Let the sword end her: in thy house she lurks.
- Orestes.* She doth, and seals its treasures for her own.
- Pylades.* Espoused to Pluto she will seal no more.
- Orestes.* But how, around her that barbaric train?
- Pylades.* What are they? For the Phrygians nought I dread.
- Orestes.* Marshals of mirrors and cosmetic washes.
- Pylades.* Brings she these Trojan gewgaws back to Greece?
- Orestes.* Greece! 'Tis a paltry spot; she breathes not in it.
- Pylades.* Well may the free disdain a host of slaves.
- Orestes.* T' achieve this deed, twice would I die with joy.
- Pylades.* Twice would I die, might I thy vengeance aid.
- Orestes.* Disclose thy purpose, and accomplish it.
- Pylades.* We enter, as in readiness to die.
- Orestes.* Thus far I comprehend thee, but no more.
- Pylades.* To her with loud laments bewail our fate.
- Orestes.* T' extort the tear, though her heart bounds with joy.
- Pylades.* This be her hour: the next may we enjoy.
- Orestes.* How then to execute the destined deed?
- Pylades.* Bear we our swords concealed beneath our vests.
- Orestes.* But can destruction reach her 'midst her train?
- Pylades.* Confined apart nought shall that crew avail.
- Orestes.* And if one dares to clamour, let him die.
- Pylades.* In that th' immediate exigence will guide us.
- Orestes.* The death of Helen then, that is the word.
- Pylades.* Agreed. That honour dictates this, now hear.  
 To draw the sword against a virtuous woman  
 Would blot our names with infamy. Her blood  
 All Greece demands, for sons, for fathers slain  
 In her cursed cause, for the deep sigh that rends  
 The widowed matron's desolated heart.  
 Shouts of applause would rend the air, thick fires  
 Blaze to the gods, and many a fervent prayer  
 Draw blessings on our heads. No longer called  
 The murderer of thy mother, thou shalt hear  
 Th' applauding voice of Greece with triumph hail thee

Revenger of the mischief-working Helen.  
What, shall the treacherous Menelaus then smile,  
Proud of his high success; and, whilst thy father,  
Thyself, thy sister fall, thy mother too,  
(But I forbear; for honour at her name  
Dims its pale fires,) seize thy rich-treasured house  
As his inheritance, and in amorous folds  
Clasp his fair wife, by Agamemnon's spear  
Recovered to his arms? Let me not live,  
If I not draw the gloomy sword against her.  
Failing in this, we'll set the house on flames,  
And nobly in the blazing ruins die.  
One must succeed: the glory shall be ours  
To die with honour, or with honour live.

*Chorus.* This guilty fair, a scandal to her sex,  
Merits th' abhorrence of each virtuous dame.

*Orestes.* Life hath no blessing like a prudent friend,  
Than treasured wealth more precious, than the power  
Of monarchs, and the people's loud applause.  
Thou on Ægisthus guidedst my just rage,  
Nor in my dangers wast thou absent: now  
Thou givst me vengeance on mine enemies,  
Nor shrinks thy firm foot back. But I forbear  
Nor with intemperate praise thine ear offend.  
I will not tamely die, but in my fall  
Pull ruin on my foes: they too shall weep,  
The traitors; they shall have their share of woe.  
Th' illustrious Agamemnon was my sire,  
Imperial chief of Greece; no tyrant he,  
But clothed with th' awful power of the just gods.  
I will not blot his splendours, like a slave  
Crouching to death; but with a liberal pride  
Throw life away, first glorying in revenge.  
Whiche'er succeeds, we triumph: yet if thence  
Despair force safety, if the sword should glance  
From us and wound their breasts, I have my wish.  
Transport is in the thought, and the light words,  
Charged with no costly pleasure, soothe my soul.

*Electra.* And this suggests a thought which lifts my mind  
To hope success and safety to us all.

*Orestes.* The prescience of a god inspires thy voice.  
But how? Oh say, for wisdom too is thine.

*Electra.* Then hear ; and thou, my brother, mark my words  
*Orestes.* Speak : there is pleasure in the hope of good.

*Electra.* The daughter of this Helen dost thou know?

*Orestes.* The fair Hermione, our mother's charge?

*Electra.* She now is gone to Clytemnestra's tomb.

*Orestes.* With what intent? Thy words awaken hope.

*Electra.* To pour libations for her mother there.

*Orestes.* As means of safety dost thou tell me this?

*Electra.* Her, when she enters, as an hostage seize.

*Orestes.* And what relief can thy thoughts hope from her?

*Electra.* If Menelaus shall for his slaughtered wife

Attempt revenge on thee, or me, or him

(For the close bond of friendship makes us one),

Tell him that thou wilt kill Hermione,

And hold the drawn sword to the virgin's breast:

If trembling for his daughter, when he sees

His wife all weltring in her blood, he saves

Thy life, the virgin give him back unhurt.

But should his wild ungovernable rage

Demand thy life, plunge deep th' unpitying steel.

Yet I am well assured his rage, though fierce

At first, will soften soon ; for Nature formed him

Nor bold, nor brave : this then I deem the fort

That guards our lives. You have what I advise.

*Orestes.* Thou excellence, that to the form divine,

The sweet attractive charm of female grace,

Hast joined a manly spirit, shalt thou die?

Shalt thou, my friend, deplore her loss, with whom,

Accomplished as she is, a life of love

Were happiness supreme?

*Pylades.*

Would heaven indulge

My warm wish, tow'rd Phocis should receive her,

With golden Hymen smiling in our train.

*Orestes.* When will Hermione return? Our toils,

If we can take the young one, must succeed,

And gloriously entangle the old savage.

*Electra.* Each moment, such the distance, I expect her.

*Orestes.* 'Tis well. My sister, my Electra, wait

Here, and receive the virgin. Let thine eye

Keep wary watch ; if friend, or partisan,

Or e'en my father's brother to the house

Approach to hinder us, some signal give,

Or beat the door, or raise thy shrilling voice.  
 And now, my friend, still faithful to my toils,  
 Address we to this great emprise, and ent'ring  
 Each with the sword of justice arm our hands.  
 And thou, who in the gloomy house of night  
 Hast thy sad dwelling, father, royal shade,  
 Thy son, Orestes, calls thee! At my prayers  
 Assistant come: for thee these sufferings fall  
 Unjustly on my head, for my just deeds.  
 Betrayed by thy base brother, 'gainst his wife  
 My stern intents are bent: aid our revenge.

*Electra.* Father, if in the realms beneath thou hear  
 Thy children call, oh come! For thee we die.

*Pylades.* Spirit of Agamemnon, kindred shade,  
 Hear me too, hear thy suppliant: save thy children!

*Orestes.* I slew my mother.

*Pylades.* My hand touched the sword.

*Electra.* And my bold counsels prompted to the deed.

*Orestes.* T' avenge thee, father.

*Electra.* Nor did I betray thee.

*Pylades.* Hear this, indignant shade, and save thy children!

*Orestes.* Accept th' oblation of these tears.

*Electra.* Accept

These groans.

*Pylades.* Now cease; and haste we to the deed.

If to the realms beneath prayers wing their way,  
 He hears. Thou Jove, our great progenitor,  
 Awfully just, to him, to me, to her  
 Extend thy guardian power; this trinal band  
 One cause, one safety, or one ruin joins:  
 We live together or together die.

#### ELECTRA, CHORUS.

*Electra.* Virgins of high Pelasgian race,  
 Achaia's pride, Mycenæ's grace!

*Chorus.* Why, royal maid, these plaintive strains?  
 That name, that title yet remains.

*Electra.* Divide, divide! With careful view  
 Watch you the street, the entrance you.

*Chorus.* And why to us this task assigned?  
 Unfold, sweet friend, unfold thy mind.

- Electra.* Lest any, standing near the gate,  
Find in this scene of blood her fate.
- Semi. I.* Haste, to your stations quickly run:  
My watch be towards the rising sun.
- Semi. II.* Be mine with cautious care address  
To where he sinks him in the west.
- Electra.* Now here, now there, now far, now nigh,  
Quick glancing dart th' observant eye.
- Semi. I.* With fond affection we obey,  
Our eyes quick glancing ev'ry way.
- Electra.* Glance through that length of hair, which flows  
Light waving o'er your shaded brows.
- Semi. I.* This way a man comes hast'ning down;  
His garb bespeaks some simple clown.
- Electra.* Undone, undone, should he disclose  
These couched, armed lions to their foes.
- Semi. I.* He passes on, suppress thy fear,  
And all this way again is clear.

## ELECTRA, to 2nd SEMICHORUS.

- And that way doth no footstep rude  
Disturb the wished-for solitude?
- Semi. II.* This way no rude step beats the ground,  
But all is still, all safe around.
- Electra.* Patience exhausted bears no more:  
Near will I listen at the door.  
Favoured with silence, why so slow  
To let the purple torrent flow?  
Blinded by beauty's dazzling ray  
Do your charmed swords refuse t' obey?  
They hear not. Roused at these alarms  
Some Argive soon will rush in arms;  
And in her aid vindictive spread  
Horror and ruin on our head.  
Watch, virgins, watch with strictest care,  
Repose hath nothing to do here.
- Chorus.* With transverse watch our heedful eye  
Each various way——
- Helena.* Io, Pelasgian Argos, I am slain! [Within.
- Electra.* Hark! Their bold hands are in the bloody act.  
It was the cry of Helena, I deem.

*Chorus.* O Jove, eternal power, hear us, and ever  
Protect our friends!

*Helena.* My dearest Menelaus,  
I die! Where art thou? Fly, oh fly to save me!

*Electra.* Kill, slay, strike, wound, dispatch, destroy:  
With iron smiles of gloomy joy  
Plunge deep the huge tempestuous blade,  
For blood, for death, for carnage made,  
Deep in her breast. She basely fled  
Her father's house, her husband's bed:  
Hence many a Greek in battle slain  
Lies mould'ring on the Phrygian plain:  
Hence, to call forth the bursting tear,  
The arrowy shower, the hurtling spear,  
And hence Scamander's silver flood  
Whirls his swoln eddies stained with blood.

*Chorus.* Hark! hark! I hear the sound of feet:  
The marble pavement now they beat.

*Electra.* Whilst slaughter is at work, my virgin friends,  
Hermione comes: cease we the measure then:  
She walks into our toils, a goodly prize.  
Silent resume your stations; fixed your eye,  
Let not your countenance betray the deed.  
My eye shall take again its mournful cast,  
As unacquainted with this havoc here.

HERMIONE, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

*Electra.* From Clytemnestra's tomb comest thou, virgin  
Thy hallowed offerings and libations paid?

*Herm.* I have appeased her shade. But from this house  
The voice of loud lament ere my approach  
Struck my astonished ear: it makes me tremble.

*Electra.* Well it beseems us: we have cause for cries.

*Herm.* Be thy voice tuned to good. Is there aught new?

*Electra.* Orestes and myself are doomed to die.

*Herm.* Be it not so, by blood to me allied!

*Electra.* Necessity lays its iron yoke on us.

*Herm.* For this did these laments sound from the house?

*Electra.* Suppliant at Helen's feet he raised the cry.

*Herm.* Who? For my knowledge on thy words depends.

*Electra.* The poor Orestes, for his life and mine.

*Herm.* Just cause for lamentation hath this house.

*Electra.* Can nature know a stronger? But come thou,  
Join in the supplication of thy friends,  
Fall at thy mother's knees—how blest her state!—  
That Menelaus allow not that we die.  
O thou, who from my mother's hand receiv'st  
Thy infant nurture, look with pity on us,  
Our woes alleviate, to the trial go:  
My foot shall lead, sweet prop of all our hopes!

*Herm.* And willingly I follow: if my voice,  
My prayers, my power avail, ye shall not die.

*Electra.* You there within the house, ye arm'd friends,  
Will you not seize your prey?

*Herm.* Ah, who are these  
Terrible to mine eye!

*Orestes.* No noise, no cry! [*Advancing.*  
To us, not to thyself, thou bringest safety.

*Electra.* Here, seize her, seize her! To her trembling  
breast

Point your keen swords, and awe her into silence.  
Let Menelaus perceive he hath found men,  
Not Phrygian slaves: men, whose bold spirits  
dare

Retort his foul wrongs on his own base head.

[*They lead her off.*

Now, my loved virgins, raise your voices high;  
Before the house ring out the notes of woe,  
That this bold deed spread no alarm, nor call  
Th' astonished Argives to these royal gates,  
Till I see Helen rolling in her blood,  
Or from the slaves attending learn her fate.

*Chorus.* Justice unsheathed her awful sword,  
And Vengeance snatched it from her hand:  
From heaven her rapid flight she poured,  
And plunged in Helen's breast the glitt'ring brand.  
For this accursed, this fatal fair  
Filled Greece with many a mournful tear,  
Since the pernicious Phrygian boy  
Enamoured bore her wanton charms to Troy.  
Hush, hush! the palace door resounds; break off.  
A Phrygian slave comes forth: learn we from him  
What fate hath wrought within.

## PHRYGIAN, CHORUS.

- Phry.* The Grecian sword from death I fled,  
In these barbaric sandals was my flight,  
Climbing the pillar's sculptured head,  
And o'er the cedar rafter's height :  
For th' unkind earth refused to save  
A flying, a barbaric slave.  
Whither, ah, whither shall I fly ?  
Oh say, ye virgin strangers, say,  
Mount the grey regions of the sky,  
Or through the foaming billows dash my way,  
Where, the firm globe encircling wide,  
Vexed Ocean rolls his roaring tide ?
- Chorus.* Servant of Helen, Phrygian, whence these cries ?
- Phry.* O Ilium, Ilium ! Woe, woe, woe !  
Ye towers, the fertile Phrygia's stately boast !  
O sacred Ida's pine-crowned brow !  
I mourn, I mourn your glories lost :  
For you these doleful notes complain,  
A mournful, a barbaric strain.  
From Leda's egg, the Swan her sire,  
The beauteous, baleful Helen rose :  
Whose eye on heaven-built Troy glares fire,  
And the rich seat of Ganymede o'erthrows :  
Hence flows, for chiefs, for heroes slain,  
The mournful, the barbaric strain.
- Chorus.* No longer hold us in suspense ; relate  
Each circumstance : conjecture errs from truth.
- Phry.* It is the song of death ; your pardon then  
That I indulged the melancholy strain.  
In Asia with barbaric voice we raise  
These notes of woe, when by the ruthless sword  
The blood of kings is shed upon the earth.  
But to my tale. Of lion port came in  
Two of your Grecians : father to the one  
Th' illustrious leader of your troops : and one  
The son of Strophius, of deep reserve,  
And dang'rous, dark design ; such was the chief  
Of Ithaca, but faithful to his friends,  
In battle bold, and in the works of war  
Of sage experience ; as a dragon fierce.  
Perdition on his silence, which concealed



Designs of death. Together they advanced  
 To the bright queen whom Paris called his wife,  
 Their eyes suffused with tears, humble their mien,  
 And at her knees, on each side one, they fell  
 Besieging her. Back start the slaves, back starts  
 Each Phrygian minister, some fearing fraud,  
 More unsuspicious some, whilst others thought  
 This dragon, crimson with his mother's blood,  
 The beauteous Spartan in his toils enclosed.

*Chorus.* Where then wast thou? Hadst thou first fled through  
 fear?

*Phry.* I then was standing, in our Phrygian mode  
 Was standing near, and with the feathered fan  
 Raised the soft gales to breathe upon her cheeks,  
 In our barbaric mode, to bid their breath  
 Sport in the ringlets of her waving hair.  
 Her curious fingers guide the thread, the spoils  
 Of Phrygia, whose rich texture formed the woof  
 T' adorn the purple pall, a mournful present  
 To Clytemnestra. With mild voice Orestes  
 Entreats her to arise, and go with him  
 To an age-honoured altar, in old times  
 The seat of Pelops, his great ancestor,  
 That she might hear his words. He led her, ah!  
 He led her! Unprophetic of her fate  
 She followed. The vile Phocian, his compeer,  
 Seized the occasion, and with stern command  
 Bade us be gone; then, dragged to separate cells,  
 Confined us from our royal mistress far.

*Chorus.* What terrible event ensued? Oh, say!

*Phry.* Goddess of Ida, potent, potent queen!  
 What scenes of blood, what impious deeds these eyes,  
 These eyes amidst the royal rooms beheld!  
 Each in his fierce hand grasped the sword concealed  
 Beneath their purple vests, his fiery glance,  
 Heedful of interruption, darting round;  
 Then, like two mountain boars, before the queen  
 They stood, and thundered, "Thou shalt die, shalt die;  
 Thy coward husband kills thee, who in Argos  
 Betrays his brother's family to death."  
 She shrieked aloud, and raising her white arm  
 In miserable manner beat her head;

Then bent her golden-sandalled feet to flight.  
But, rushing fierce, Orestes in her hair  
Locked his rude hand, and bending to the left  
Her head, prepared to plunge th' impetuous  
sword  
Deep in her throat.

*Chorus.* Where were her Phrygians then?

They ran, belike, on all sides to her aid.

*Phry.* Roused by her cries we burst the bars, and each  
From forth his separate cell rushed to her aid.  
Some in their hasty hands snatched stones, some  
seized

The beamy spear, th' unwieldy falchion some :  
'Gainst us in dreadless rage the Phocian came,  
Fierce as the Trojan Hector, fierce as Ajax,  
Whose triple-crested helm I saw, I saw  
Dreadfully waving in the gates of Priam.  
Clashing our swords met his ; but then, oh then  
Was seen how weak, how spiritless our arms  
Opposed in fight against the force of Greece ;  
One hasty running, dying one, one gashed  
With wounds, wild with affright another bends  
Imploring mercy ; sheltering in the dark  
We fly, and all was terror, blood, and death.  
Just as th' uplifted sword threatened to shed  
Her mother's blood on th' earth, Hermione came ;  
Swift with unhallowed rage they dart on her,  
And seize their trembling prey ; then turn again  
To execute the work of death on Helen.  
Meanwhile, O heaven ! O earth ! O day ! O night !  
Forth from the chamber through the vestibule,  
Whether by some enchantment, by the power  
Of magic, or the stealth of fav'ring gods,  
She vanished. What hath happened since I know  
not,

Intent on hasty flight to save myself.  
For all his toils, all his distressful toils,  
Barren return hath Menelaus received,  
And led his beauteous wife from Troy in vain.

*Chorus.* Terror succeeds to terror ; for mine eyes  
Behold Orestes there before the house  
Walk with disordered pace, and grasp his sword.

ORESTES, PHRYGIAN, CHORUS.

*Orestes.* Where is the slave, who this way fled my sword?

*Phry.* Low at thy feet, such our barbaric use,  
Thus prostrate I implore thy mercy, king.

*Orestes.* This is not Ilium, but the land of Greece.

*Phry.* In any land life to the wise is sweet.

*Orestes.* Hast thou raised cries to call the Spartan's aid?

*Phry.* Thee rather would I aid: more worthy thou.

*Orestes.* This Helen then, with justice did she die?

*Phry.* Most justly: had she three lives, she should lose  
them.

*Orestes.* Thy servile fear smooths thy dissembling tongue.

*Phry.* No. Should she live who wasted Greece and  
Troy?

*Orestes.* Swear, I will kill thee else, thou flatterest not.

*Phry.* Now by my life I swear, sincerely swear.

*Orestes.* Was the steel dreadful thus to all at Troy?

*Phry.* Keep thy sword off: near, it glares terror to me.

*Orestes.* Freeze not to stone, as seen the Gorgon's head.

*Phry.* Let me not die; no Gorgon's head I know.

*Orestes.* Fears a slave death, the end of all his ills?

*Phry.* To slave or free sweet is the light of heaven.

*Orestes.* Well urged: thy wisdom saves thee: go thou in.

*Phry.* Thou wilt not kill me then?

*Orestes.* In safety go.

*Phry.* Thy words breathe music.

*Orestes.* But I may retract

This lenity.

*Phry.* No music breathes in that.

*Orestes.* Fool, if thou thinkst thy blood shall stain my  
sword,

Nor woman thou, nor in the scale of men.

To stop thy clamours came I: Argos soon

Is roused at every noise. For Menelaus

We fear him not: our swords shall welcome him:

Let him then come, proud of his golden locks

That wanton o'er his shoulders. Should he raise

The men of Argos, and for Helen's death

Lead them against this house, and menace me,

My sister, and my friend, he shall behold

His daughter, with his wife, weltring in blood.

## CHORUS.

*Semi. I.* Other horrors, other woes  
Rise this royal house t' enclose.

*Semi. II.* Haste we then to spread th' alarm  
Or keep silence, shunning harm?

*Semi. I.* See the sudden smoke arise,  
Waving tidings to the skies!

*Semi. II.* From the torch that dusky wreath  
Threatens ruin, flames, and death.

*Chorus.* What event the gods assign,  
Mortal, to submit is thine.  
Here some stern relentless power  
Bade the horrid ruin roar,  
When the blood-stained car beneath  
Myrtilus lay rolled in death.

But see, with hasty step the Spartan comes,  
Informed, belike, of these rough deeds of death.  
Quick, quick, ye royal youths—make fast these gates,  
Prevent the foe; for to th' unfortunate,  
Like thee, Orestes, dreadful are the wrongs  
Of insolent and rude prosperity.

MENELAUS *below*, ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA,  
HERMIONE *above*, CHORUS.

*Mene.* I heard the horrid and atrocious deeds  
Of these two lions, men I call them not;  
My wife not dead, I hear, but disappeared.  
This idle rumour I received from one,  
Bewildered with his fears; the bitter scoff,  
The artifice of him that slew his mother.  
Open the gates here: slaves, I speak to you,  
Unbar the gates, that I at least may save  
My daughter from their bloody hands, and bear  
My poor lost wife away, whose murderers  
This vengeful hand should recompense with death.

*Orestes.* Stand off! forbear! Spartan, I speak to thee  
Tow'ring in pride! Dare but to touch the gate,  
I will rend down this ancient pinnacle  
That crowns the battlements, and crush thy head.  
The gates are shut, and barricadoed strong,  
To guard me from thy efforts and thy friends'.

*Mene.* Ha! what is this? What mean these blazing torches?  
 Why on the battlements this station fixed?  
 Why at my daughter's bosom points that sword?

*Orestes.* Is it thy will to question, or to hear me?

*Mene.* Neither; but by compulsion I must hear thee.

*Orestes.* Be thou assured, thy daughter I will kill.

*Mene.* Thou hast killed Helen: wilt thou shed more blood?

*Orestes.* Would I had killed her, nor the gods beguiled me!

*Mene.* Her murder dost thou tauntingly deny?

*Orestes.* With sorrow I deny it: 'twas my wish.

*Mene.* What to have done? Thy words excite my fear.

*Orestes.* To sacrifice this baleful pest of Greece.

*Mene.* Give me the body, that I may entomb it.

*Orestes.* Ask of the gods: but I will kill thy daughter.

*Mene.* The mother slain, wilt thou add blood to blood?

*Orestes.* T' avenge my father; yet betrayed by thee.

*Mene.* Art thou not sated with thy mother's blood?

*Orestes.* Never, with punishing such impious women.

*Mene.* And art thou, Pylades, accomplice with him?

*Orestes.* His silence speaks: sufficient my reply.

*Mene.* But short thy joy, unless thou fly on wings.

*Orestes.* We will not fly: but we will fire the house.

*Mene.* Thy father's royal seat in ruins sink!

*Orestes.* That it may ne'er be thine: and at the flames  
 Her will I sacrifice.

*Mene.* Ay, kill her, do;  
 I will have vengeance, ample vengeance on thee.

*Orestes.* Thus then.

*Mene.* Ah, stay thee! do not, do not kill her!

*Orestes.* Be silent now, and with composure bear  
 Th' afflictions, which with justice light on thee.

*Mene.* What, is it justice then that thou shouldst live?

*Orestes.* Live! Ay, and reign.

*Mene.* Where wouldst thou reign?  
*Orestes.* In Argos.

*Mene.* Pelasgian Argos.

*Mene.* At the sacred rites  
 Well would those hands the cleansing lavers touch.

*Orestes.* And wherefore not?

*Mene.* And, ere the spear is raised,  
 Offer the hallowed victim!

*Orestes.* Dost not thou?

*Mene.* And well : my hands are pure.

*Orestes.* But not thy heart.

*Mene.* Who will hold converse with thee ?

*Orestes.* He that loves

His father.

*Mene.* He too, who reveres his mother ?

*Orestes.* Happy his state.

*Mene.* Unhappy then is thine.

*Orestes.* Because such impious women I abhor.

*Mene.* Take, from my daughter's bosom take thy sword.

*Orestes.* False are thy words.

*Mene.* My daughter wilt thou kill ?

*Orestes.* Now thou speakst truth.

*Mene.* Ah me, what shall I do ?

*Orestes.* Go to the Argives, and persuade them——

*Mene.* What

Shall I persuade them ?

*Orestes.* Ask the state to spare

Our lives.

*Mene.* Or you will kill my daughter ?

*Orestes.* Ay.

*Mene.* Unhappy Helen !

*Orestes.* Am not I unhappy ?

*Mene.* From Troy I brought thee to be butchered here.

*Orestes.* Would it were so !

*Mene.* After a thousand toils——

*Orestes.* But not for me.

*Mene.* These dreadful ills fall on me.

*Orestes.* Thou hadst no will to serve me.

*Mene.* Thou hast caught me.

*Orestes.* No : by thy baseness thou hast caught thyself.

But go, Electra, fire the house below :

And thou, my Pylades, my faithful friend,

Set from these battlements the roof on fire.

*Mene.* Arm, arm, ye sons of Greece ! ye warlike Argives,

Fly to my aid. Despair of life, and guilt

Stained with his mother's blood, prompt his bold hand

In one wide ruin to involve the city.

#### APOLLO.

Cease, Menelaus, forbear this fiery rage :

Apollo speaks : revere the present god.

And thou, Orestes, whose uplifted sword  
 Threatens that virgin's life, forbear, and hear.  
 Her whom thy rage, to work him woe, assailed,  
 This radiant form in tissued clouds enshrined,  
 Snatched from thy sword I saved : such the command  
 Of heaven's high king : his beauteous progeny  
 Soars above mortal fate, and orb'd in heaven  
 Immortal 'midst her kindred stars she shines,  
 Beaming kind influence on the mariners.  
 Lead to thy royal house another wife ;  
 Since by her beauty the just gods awoke  
 'Twixt Greece and Troy the rage of war, to free  
 The groaning earth from impious multitudes.  
 Such is the fate of Helen. Thou, Orestes,  
 Quitting this country, in Parrhasia's plains  
 For one revolving year thy dwelling fix,  
 And give the place thy name ; that honour share  
 With Azan and with Arcas. Pass from thence  
 To Athens ; there against the Furies urge  
 Thy plea, acquit thee of thy mother's blood :  
 There in that awful court the gods shall sit  
 Thy judges ; and thy just cause shall prevail.  
 Her, at whose throat thy angry sword was pointed,  
 The gods decree thy wife ; though Pyrrhus dreams  
 Of nuptial joys, the Delphic sword awaits him ;  
 My vengeance on Achilles this demands.  
 To Pylades thy sister is betrothed ;  
 Give him his bride : and happiness attends  
 To pour her blessings on their future years.  
 Thou, Menelaus, yield that Orestes reign  
 At Argos : haste to Sparta, reign thou there,  
 And wear that crown, the dowry of thy wife,  
 The well-earned meed of all the toils she caused thee.  
 It shall be mine t' appease the state to him,  
 Compelled by my command to slay his mother.  
*Orestes.* Thou god of oracles, prophet of good,  
 True are thy words, and faithful. Yet my soul  
 Was struck with horror, lest some vengeful power  
 Spoke this, which I misdeemed thy voice divine.  
 But all is well. Obedient to thy word  
 I drop the sword : and, if her father gives her,  
 Wish to receive Hermione my bride.

*Mene.* Daughter of Jove, bright Helen, hail ! Thy state  
'Midst the blest mansions of th' immortal gods  
I reverence. Now, Orestes, give I thee  
My daughter, at the bidding of the god.  
Illustrious in thy race thou takest a wife  
Not less illustrious : blessings on thy hand  
That takes her, and on mine that gives her to thee.

*Apollo.* Each now depart, as I commanded : cease  
Your strife.

*Mene.* T' obey is ours.

*Orestes.* Such are my thoughts.

Now, Menelaus, to all these evils past  
My soul speaks peace ; and to thy oracles.

*Apollo.* Go then your ways, now go, and reverence Peace,  
Most beauteous of the gods. I will conduct  
Th' immortal Helen to the house of Jove  
O'er yon star-spangled sky, to the bright seats  
Where, with majestic Juno, and the bloom  
Of Hebe ever young, Alcides' joy,  
A goddess she shall hear the vows of mortals ;  
And honoured with the twin-born sons of Jove  
Guide the tost mariners, and rule the sea.

*Chorus.* O victory, I revere thy sober triumphs :  
Thus ever guard, thus ever crown my life !



# ANDROMACHE

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ANDROMACHE.  
ATTENDANT.  
CHORUS of PHTHIAN WOMEN.  
HERMIONE.  
MENELAUS.  
MOLOSSUS.

PELEUS.  
NURSE OF HERMIONE.  
ORESTES.  
MESSENGER.  
THETIS.

*Scene.*—THE VESTIBULE OF THETIS' TEMPLE BETWEEN PHTHIA  
AND PHARSALIA IN THESSALY.

### ANDROMACHE.

O THEBES, thou pride of Asia, from whose gate  
I came resplendent with a plenteous dower,  
To Priam's regal house, the fruitful wife  
Of Hector: his Andromache was erst  
An envied name: but now am I more wretched  
Than any woman, or already born,  
Or to be born hereafter; for I saw  
My husband Hector by Achilles slain,  
And that unhappy son whom to my lord  
I bore, Astyanax, from Troy's high towers  
Thrown headlong; when our foes had sacked the  
city,  
Myself descended from a noble line  
Of freeborn warriors, reached the Grecian coast,  
On Neoptolemus that island prince  
For the reward of his victorious arms  
Bestowed: selected from the Phrygian spoils.  
'Twixt Phthia and Pharsalia, in these fields,  
I dwell, where Thetis from the haunts of men  
Retreating, with her Peleus erst abode.  
By Thessaly's inhabitants, this spot  
Is from th' auspicious nuptials of that goddess  
Called Thetidæum: here Achilles' son

Residing, suffers Peleus still to rule  
Pharsalia's land, nor will assume the sceptre  
While lives his aged grandsire. In these walls  
A son, who to th' embraces of my lord  
Achilles' offspring, owes his birth, I bore,  
And though I had been wretched, a fond hope  
Still cherished, that while yet the boy was safe  
I some protection and relief might find  
In my calamities ; but since my lord  
(Spurning my servile couch) that Spartan dame  
Hermione espoused, with ruthless hate  
By her am I pursued ; for she pretends  
That I, by drugs endued with magic power,  
Administered in secret, make her barren  
And odious to her lord, because I wish  
To occupy this mansion in her stead,  
And forcibly to drive her from his couch,  
To which, at first I with reluctance came,  
But now have left it : mighty Jove can witness  
That I became the partner of his bed  
Against my own consent. But she remains  
Deaf to conviction, and attempts to slay me :  
In this design her father Menelaus  
Assists his daughter, he is now within,  
And on such errand left the Spartan realm :  
Fearing his rage, I near the palace take  
My seat, in Thetis' temple, that the goddess  
From death may save me ; for both Peleus' self,  
And the descendants of that monarch, hold  
This structure reared in memory of his wedlock  
With the fair Nereid, in religious awe.  
But hence, in secret, trembling for his life,  
My only child have I conveyed away,  
Because his noble father is not present  
To aid me, and avails not now to guard  
His son, while absent in the Delphic land,  
To expiate there the rage with which he sought  
The Pythian tripod, and from Phoebus claimed  
A reparation for his father's death.  
If haply he can deprecate the curses  
Attendant on his past misdeeds, and make  
The god propitious to his future days.

## FEMALE ATTENDANT, ANDROMACHE.

*Attend.* My queen, for still I scruple not to use  
 The same respectful title which I gave you  
 When we in Ilion dwelt ; you and your lord  
 While he was living, shared my duteous love,  
 And now I with important tidings fraught  
 To you am come, trembling indeed lest one  
 Of our new rulers overhear the tale,  
 Yet greatly pitying your disastrous fate :  
 For Menelaus and his daughter form  
 Dire plots against you ; of these foes beware.

*Andro.* O my dear fellow-servant (for thou shar'st  
 Her bondage who was erst thy queen, but now  
 Is wretched), ah ! what mean they ? what fresh schemes  
 Have they devised to take away my life,  
 Who am by woes encompassed ?

*Attend.* They intend,  
 O miserable dame, to kill your son,  
 Whom privately you from this house conveyed.

*Andro.* Are they informed I sent the child away ?  
 Ah me ! who told them ? in what utter ruin  
 Am I involved !

*Attend.* I know not ; but thus much  
 Of their designs I heard ; in quest of him  
 Is Menelaus from these doors gone forth.

*Andro.* Then am I lost indeed : for, O my child,  
 These two relentless vultures mean to seize thee,  
 And take away thy life, while he who bears  
 A father's name, at Delphi still remains.

*Attend.* You had not fared so ill, I am convinced,  
 If he were present, but now every friend  
 Deserts you.

*Andro.* Is there not a rumour spread  
 Of Peleus' coming ?

*Attend.* He, though he were here,  
 Is grown too old to aid you.

*Andro.* More than once  
 I sent to him.

*Attend.* Suppose you that he heeds  
 None of your messengers ?

*Andro.* What means this question ?  
 Wilt thou accept such office ?

*Attend.* What pretext  
To colour my long absence from this house  
Shall I allege?

*Andro.* Full many are the schemes  
Which thou, who art a woman, can devise.

*Attend.* 'Twere dangerous; for Hermione is watchful.

*Andro.* Dost thou perceive the danger, and renounce  
Thy friends in their distress?

*Attend.* Not thus: forbear  
To brand me with so infamous a charge:  
I go; for of small value is the life  
(Whate'er befall me) of a female slave.

[*Exit ATTENDANT.*]

*Andro.* Proceed: meanwhile I to the conscious air  
Those plaints and bitter wailings will repeat,  
On which I ever dwell. Unhappy women  
Find comfort in perpetually talking  
Of what they suffer. But my groans arise  
Not from one ill, but many ills: the walls  
Of my loved country razed, my Hector slain,  
And that hard fortune, in whose yoke bound fast,  
Thus am I fallen into th' unseemly state  
Of servitude. We never ought to call  
Frail mortals happy, at their latest hour  
Till we behold them to the shades descend.

#### ELEGY.

In Helen sure, to Troy's imperial towers  
Young Paris wafted no engaging bride,  
But when he led her to those nuptial bowers,  
Some fiend infernal crossed the billowy tide.

With brandished javelin and devouring flame,  
For her the Grecian warriors to thy shore,  
O Ilion, in a thousand vessels came,  
And drenched thy smould'ring battlements with gore.

Around the walls, my Hector, once thy boast,  
Fixed to his car, was by Achilles borne,  
And from my chamber hurried to the coast  
I veiled my head in servitude forlorn.

Much wept these streaming eyes, when in the dust  
 My city, palace, husband, prostrate lay.  
 Subject to fierce Hermione's disgust,  
 Why should I still behold the hated day?

Harassed with insults from that haughty dame,  
 Round Thetis' bust my suppliant arms I fling,  
 And here with gushing tears bewail my shame,  
 As from the rock burst forth the living spring.

## CHORUS, ANDROMACHE

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I. 1.

O thou, who seated in this holy space,  
 Hast Thetis' temple thy asylum made,  
 Though Phthia gave me birth, to aid  
 Thee, hapless dame of Asiatic race,  
 I hither come; would I from direful harms  
 Could guard, could heal the strife  
 'Twixt thee and that indignant wife  
 Hermione, whom ruthless discord arms  
 To punish thee the rival of her charms,  
 A captive, to the genial bed,  
 Who by Achilles' son wert led.

## I. 2.

Aware of fate, th' impending evil weigh.  
 A helpless Phrygian nymph, thou striv'st in vain  
 'Gainst her of Sparta's proud domain:  
 Cease to this sea-born goddess, cease to pray,  
 And at her blazing shrine no longer stay:  
 For how can it avail  
 To thee with hopeless sorrow pale  
 To suffer all thy beauties to decay,  
 Because thy rulers with oppression sway?  
 Thou to superior might must bend.  
 Why, feeble as thou art, contend?

## II. 1.

Yet hasten from the Nereid's lofty seat,  
Consider that thou tread'st a foreign plain,  
And that these hostile walls detain  
In strictest bondage thy reluctant feet,  
Here none of all those friends, that numerous band,  
Who shared thy greatness, is at hand,  
To cheer thee in these days of shame,  
O wretched, wretched dame.

## II. 2.

A miserable matron thou art come  
From Troy to our abodes, unwilling guest ;  
Though mine the sympathizing breast.  
Yet I through reverence to our lords am dumb,  
Lest she, who springs from Helen, child of Jove,  
Should be a witness of that love  
Which I to thee whose griefs I share,  
Impelled by pity bear.

## HERMIONE, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

*Herm.* The gorgeous ornaments of gold, these brows  
Encircling, and the tissued robes I wear,  
I from Achilles', or from Peleus' stores,  
As chosen presents when I hither came,  
Received not, but from Sparta's realm, these gifts  
My father Menelaus hath bestowed  
With a large dower, that I might freely speak.  
Such is the answer which to you I make,  
O Phthian dames. But thou, who art a slave  
And captive, wouldst in these abodes usurp  
Dominion, and expel me ; to my lord  
Thy drugs have made me odious, hence ensues  
My barrenness : the Asiatic dames,  
For these abhorred devices are renowned ;  
But thee will I subdue, nor shall this dome  
Of the immortal Nereid, nor her altar  
Or temple save thee from impending death ;  
If either man or god should be disposed  
To rescue thee, 'twere fit that to atone  
For the proud thoughts thou in thy happier days

Didst nourish, thou shouldst tremble, at my knees  
 Fall low, and sweep the pavement of my house,  
 Sprinkling the waters from a golden urn.  
 Know where thou art : no Hector governs here,  
 No Phrygian Priam doth this sceptre wield ;  
 This is no Chrysa, but a Grecian city.  
 Yet thou, O wretched woman, art arrived  
 At such a pitch of madness, that thou dar'st  
 To sleep e'en with the son of him who slew  
 Thy husband, and a brood of children bear  
 To him whose hands yet reek with Phrygian gore,  
 Such is the whole abhorred barbarian race ;  
 The father with his daughter, the vile son  
 With his own mother, with her brother too  
 The sister, sons, friends by their dearest friends  
 Are murdered ; deeds like these no wholesome law  
 Prohibits : introduce not among us  
 Such crimes, for 'tis unseemly that one man  
 Possess two women ; the fond youth who seeks  
 Domestic harmony, confines his love  
 To one fair partner of the genial bed.

*Chorus.* The female sex are envious, and pursue  
 With an incessant hatred those who share  
 Their nuptial joys.

*Andro.* Alas ! impetuous youth  
 Proves baleful to mankind, and there are none  
 Who act with justice in their blooming years.  
 But what I dread is this, lest slavery curb  
 My tongue, though I have many truths to utter :  
 In this dispute with you, if I prevail,  
 That very triumph may become my bane -  
 For those of haughty spirits ill endure  
 The most prevailing arguments when urged  
 By their inferiors. Yet my better cause  
 I will not thus betray. Say, youthful princess,  
 What reasons of irrefragable force  
 Enable me to drive you from the couch  
 Of your own lawful husband ? to the Phrygians  
 Is Sparta grown inferior, and hath fortune  
 On us conferred the palm ? Do you behold me  
 Still free ? elate with youth, a vigorous frame,  
 The wide extent of empire I possess,

And number of my friends, am I desirous  
To occupy these mansions in your stead,  
That in your stead I might bring forth a race  
Of slaves, th' appendages of my distress?  
Will any one endure (if you produce  
No children) that my sons should be the kings  
Of Phthia?—the Greeks love me for the sake  
Of Hector, I too was forsooth obscure,  
And not a queen, in Troy. Your husband's hate,  
Not from my drugs, but from your soul, unsuited  
For social converse, springs: there is a philtre  
To gain his love. Not beauty, but the virtues,  
O woman, to the partners of our bed  
Afford delight. But if it sting your pride  
That Sparta's a vast city, while you treat  
Scyros with scorn, amidst the poor, display  
Your riches, and of Menelaus speak  
As greater than Achilles; hence your lord  
Abhors you. For a woman, though bestowed  
On a vile mate, should learn to yield, nor strive  
For the pre-eminence. In Thrace o'erspread  
With snow, if you were wedded to a king,  
Who to his bed takes many various dames,  
Would you have slain them? you would cast disgrace  
On your whole sex by such unsated lust;  
Base were the deed: for though our souls are warmed  
With more intense desires than those of men  
We modestly conceal them. For thy sake  
I, O my dearest Hector, loved the objects  
Of thy affections, whene'er Venus' wiles  
Caused thee to err, and at my breast full oft  
Nourished thy spurious children, that in nought  
Thy joys I might embitter: acting thus  
I won him by my virtues. But you tremble  
E'en if the drops of Heaven's transparent dew  
Rest on your husband. Strive not to transcend  
Your mother in a wild excess of love,  
O woman. For the children, if endued  
With reason, such examples should avoid  
Of those who bore them, as corrupt the soul.

*Chorus.* As far as possible, O queen, comply  
With my advice, and in mild terms accost her.



*Herm.* What mean'st thou by this arrogance of speech,  
This vain debate, as if thou still wert chaste,  
And I had strayed from virtue's path?

*Andro.* You have been using, now at least are void  
Of modesty. The words

*Herm.* O woman, may this breast  
Harbour no soul like thine.

*Andro.* Though bashful youth  
Glow on your cheek, indecent is your language.

*Herm.* Thou by thy actions more than by thy words  
Hast proved the malice which to me thou bear'st.

*Andro.* Why will you not conceal th' inglorious pangs  
Of jealous love?

*Herm.* What woman but resents  
Such wrongs, and deems them great?

*Andro.* The use some make  
Of these misfortunes adds to their renown:  
But shame waits those who are devoid of wisdom.

*Herm.* We dwell not in a city where prevail  
Barbarian laws.

*Andro.* In Phrygia or in Greece  
Base actions are with infamy attended.

*Herm.* Though most expert in every subtle art,  
Yet die thou must.

*Andro.* Behold you 'Thetis' image  
Turning its eyes on you?

*Herm.* She loathes thy country  
Where her Achilles treacherously was slain.

*Andro.* Your mother Helen caused his death, not I.

*Herm.* Wouldst thou retrace still farther the sad tale  
Of our misfortunes?

*Andro.* I restrain my tongue.

*Herm.* Speak to me now on that affair which caused  
My coming hither.

*Andro.* All I say is this:

You have not so much wisdom as you need.

*Herm.* From this pure temple of the sea-born goddess  
Wilt thou depart?

*Andro.* Not while I live: you first  
Must slay, then drag me hence.

*Herm.* I am resolved

How to proceed, and wait my lord's return  
No longer.

*Andro.* Nor will I before he come  
Surrender up myself.

*Herm.* With flaming brands  
Hence will I drive thee, and no deference pay  
To thy entreaties.

*Andro.* Kindle them ; the gods  
Will view the deed.

*Herm.* The scourge too is prepared.

*Andro.* Transpierce this bosom, deluge with my gore  
The altar of the goddess, you by her  
Shall be at length o'ertaken.

*Herm.* From thy cradle,  
Trained up and hardened in barbarian pride,  
Canst thou endure to die ? from this asylum  
Soon will I rouse thee by thy own consent,  
I with such baits am furnished, but conceal  
My purpose, which th' event itself ere long  
Will make conspicuous. Keep a steady seat,  
For though by molten lead thou wert enclosed  
Hence would I rouse thee, ere Achilles' son,  
Whom thou confid'st in, to this land return.

[*Exit HERMIONE.*]

*Andro.* In him I place my still unshaken trust.  
Yet is it strange that the celestial powers,  
To heal the serpent's venom, have assigned  
Expedients, but no remedy devised  
Against an evil woman who surpasses  
Or vipers' stings or the consuming flame :  
Thus baleful is our influence on mankind.

# CHORUS.

## ODE.

### I. I.

The winged son of Maia and of Jove  
To many sorrowful events gave birth,  
And scattered discord o'er the bleeding earth,  
When he through sacred Ida's piny grove  
Guided the car of three immortal dames,

(The golden prize of beauty to obtain,  
In hateful strife engaged, who urged their claims);  
To where in his mean hut abode a lonely swain.

## I. 2.

No sooner had they reached the destined bower,  
Than in the limpid spring her snowy frame  
Each goddess laved; to Priam's son then came  
With artful speeches of such winning power  
As might beguile the rash and amorous boy:  
Venus prevailed; her words, though sweet their sound,  
Proved of destructive consequence to Troy,  
Whose stately bulwarks hence lie levelled with the  
ground.

## II. 1.

When new-born Paris first beheld the light,  
Would that his mother, o'er her head, this brand  
Ordained by Heaven to fire his native land,  
Had cast, before he dwelt on Ida's height.  
Unheeded from the bay's prophetic shade  
Exclaimed Cassandra: "Let the child be slain;  
Kill him, or Priam's empire is betrayed."  
Frantic she raved and sued to every prince in vain.

## II. 2.

Deaf was each prince, or Ilion ne'er had felt  
The servile yoke, nor hadst thou, hapless fair,  
Beneath these roofs, encompassed by despair,  
And subject to a rigid master, dwelt.  
O had he died, the fated toil of Greece,  
That stubborn war through ten revolving years,  
Had roused no heroes from the lap of peace,  
Nor caused the widow's shrieks, the hoary father's tears.

MENELAUS, MOLOSSUS, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

*Mene.* Your son I hither bring, whom from this fane  
With secrecy, you to another house,  
Without my daughter's knowledge, had removed.  
You boasted that this image of the goddess  
To you, and those who hid him, would afford

A sure asylum : but your deep-laid craft,  
O woman, cannot baffle Menelaus.  
If you depart not hence, he in your stead  
Shall be the victim ; therefore well revolve  
Th' important question ; had you rather die,  
Or, with his streaming gore, let him atone  
The foul offence 'gainst me and 'gainst my daughter  
By you committed ?

*Andro.*

Thou, O vain opinion,  
Hast with renown puffed up full many men  
Who were of no account. I deem those blest  
On whom with truth such honour is bestowed :  
But them who by fallacious means obtain it  
I hold unworthy of possessing fame,  
When all their seeming wisdom but arises  
From Fortune's gifts. Thou with the bravest chiefs  
Of Greece, from Priam erst didst wrest his Troy ;  
E'en thou who art so mean as to inspire  
Thy daughter with resentment 'gainst a child,  
And strive with me a miserable captive :  
Unworthy of thy conquest over Troy  
Thee do I hold, and Troy yet more disgraced  
By such a victor. Some indeed there are  
To all appearance upright, who awhile  
Outwardly glitter, though they in their hearts  
Are on a level with the worthless bulk  
Of mortals, and superior but in wealth  
Whose power is great. This conference let us end  
O Menelaus, be it now supposed  
I by thy daughter am already slain :  
'Twill be impossible for her to 'scape  
From the pollution ruthless murder brings ;  
Thou too by many tongues wilt be accused  
Of this vile deed, with her will they confound  
Thee the abettor. But if I preserve  
My life, are ye resolved to slay my son ?  
How will the father tamely bear the death  
Of his loved offspring ? he was not esteemed  
At Troy so void of courage. He is gone  
Whither his duty calls. Soon will the chief  
Act worthy of the race from which he springs,  
The hoary Peleus, and his dauntless sire

Achilles, he from these abodes will cast  
 Thy daughter forth, and when thou to another  
 In marriage giv'st her, what hast thou to say  
 On her behalf? "That from a worthless lord  
 Her wisdom drove her?" This would be a falsehood  
 Too gross. But who would wed her? till grown grey  
 In widowhood, shall she beneath thy roofs  
 Fix her loathed residence? O wretched man,  
 The rising conflux of unnumbered woes  
 Behold'st thou not? hadst thou not rather find  
 Thy daughter wronged by concubines, than suffering  
 Th' indignities I speak of? we from trifles  
 Such grievous mischiefs ought not to create;  
 Nor if we women are a deadly bane,  
 To the degenerate nature of our sex  
 Should men conform. If I pernicious drugs  
 Have to thy daughter ministered, and been,  
 As she pretends, the cause of her abortion,  
 Immediately will I without reluctance,  
 And without grovelling at this altar's base,  
 To any rigid punishment submit  
 Inflicted by thy son-in-law, from whom  
 I surely merit as severe revenge  
 For having made him childless. Such am I:  
 But in thy temper I perceive one cause  
 Of just alarm, since in that luckless strife  
 About a woman, and a vile one too,  
 Thou the famed Phrygian city didst destroy.

*Chorus.* Too freely hast thou spoken, in a tone  
 Which ill becomes thy sex, and that high soul  
 The bounds of wisdom hath o'erleaped.

*Mene.* O woman,  
 So small an object, as you rightly judge,  
 Deserves not the attention of my realm,  
 Nor that of Greece. But learn this obvious truth:  
 To any man whate'er he greatly needs,  
 Is of more worth by far than taking 'Troy.  
 My daughter I assist, because I deem it  
 A wrong of great importance should she lose  
 Her bridal rights: for every woman looks  
 On all beside as secondary ills:  
 But if she from her husband's arms be torn.

Seems reft of life itself. That Phthia's prince  
Direct my servants, and that his obey  
Me and my race, is fitting : for true friends  
Have no distinct possessions, but hold all  
In common. While I wait for the return  
Of her long absent lord, should I neglect  
My daughter's interests, I were weak, not wise.  
But leave this shrine of Thetis : for the child  
Shall if you bleed escape th' impending doom :  
Him, if you die not, will I slay, since fate  
Of you or him the forfeit life demands.

*Andro.* Ah me ! a bitter and unwelcome choice  
Of life on terms like these hast thou proposed ;  
Wretch that I am ! for whether I decline  
Or make such option, I am wretched still.  
O thou, who by a trifling wrong provoked,  
Committ'st great crimes, attend : for what offence  
Wouldst thou bereave me of my life ? what city  
Have I betrayed ? what child of thine destroyed ?  
What mansion fired ? I to my master's bed  
By force was dragged : yet me alone, not him  
The author of that crime, thou mean'st to slay.  
Thou, the first cause o'erlooking, on th' effect  
Which it produces, vent'st thy rage. What woes  
Encompass wretched me ! alas ! my country !  
How dreadful are the wrongs which I endure !  
But wherefore was I doomed to bear a child,  
And to the burden under which I groan  
Add a new burden ? what delight can life  
To me afford ? or on what fortunes past  
Or present should I turn these eyes which saw  
The corse of Hector by the victor's car  
Whirled round the walls, and wretched Troy a heap  
Of blazing ruins ? I meantime a slave  
By my dishevelled hair was dragged aboard  
The Argive navy ; when I reached the coast  
Of Phthia, and cohabited with those  
Who slew my Hector ; (but why lavish plaints  
On past calamities, without deploring  
Or taking a due estimate of those  
Which now impend ?) I had this only son  
My life's last comfort left, and they who take

Delight in deeds of cruelty, would slay him ;  
 Yet to preserve my miserable life  
 He shall not perish ; for auspicious hopes,  
 Could he be saved, his future days attend :  
 But if I died not for my son, reproach  
 Would be my portion. Lo ! I leave the altar  
 And now am in thy hands, stab, slay me, bind,  
 Strain hard the deadly noose. My son, thy mother  
 To rescue thee from an untimely grave,  
 Descends the shades beneath ; if thou escape  
 The ruthless grasp of fate, remember me  
 How miserably I suffered ; and with kisses,  
 At his return, when thou goest forth to meet  
 Thy father, when a flood of tears thou shedd'st,  
 And cling'st around him with those pliant arms,  
 Inform him how I acted. All men hold  
 Their children dear as life ; but he who scorns then  
 Because he ne'er experienced what it is  
 To be a father, though with fewer griefs  
 Attended, but enjoys imperfect bliss.

*[Rises, and advances from the altar.]*

*Chorus.* I with compassion to this moving tale  
 Have listened ; for distress, to all mankind,  
 Though strangers, must seem piteous : but on thee,  
 O Menelaus, 'tis incumbent now  
 To reconcile thy daughter, and this captive,  
 That she may from her sorrows be released.

*Mene.* Seize her, and bind her hands ; for she shall hear  
 No pleasing language : I proposed to slay  
 Your son, that you might leave that hallowed altar  
 Of Thetis, and thus craftily induced you  
 To fall into my hands, and meet your death ;  
 Be well assured, such is the present state  
 Of your affairs : as for that boy, on him  
 My daughter shall pass judgment, or to kill,  
 Or spare him : but now enter these abodes,  
 That you may learn, slave as you are, to treat  
 Those who are free no longer with disdain.

*Andro.* Thou hast o'erreached me by thy treacherous arts ;  
 Alas ! I am betrayed.

*Mene.* Proclaim these tidings  
 To all men ; for I shall not contradict them.

*Andro.* By those who dwell beside Eurotas' stream  
Are such base frauds called wisdom?

*Mene.* Both at Troy  
And there, 'tis just the injured should retaliate.

*Andro.* Believ'st thou that the gods are gods no longer,  
Nor wield the bolt of vengeance?

*Mene.* We must look  
To that : but you shall die.

*Andro.* And wilt thou seize  
This unfledged bird, to slay him?

*Mene.* No, I will not,  
But give him to my daughter, who must act  
As she thinks fit.

*Andro.* Then how, alas, my son !  
Can I sufficiently bewail thy fate?

*Mene.* "Him," 'twas but now with arrogance you said,  
"Auspicious hopes attend."

*Andro.* Ye worst of foes  
To all mankind, inhabitants of Sparta !  
Expert in treacherous counsels, still devising  
New falsehoods, curst artificers of mischief,  
Your paths are crooked, yet though void of worth,  
Through Greece by circumspection ye uphold  
An undeserved pre-eminence. What crimes,  
What murders, what a thirst for abject gain  
Characterize your realm ! with specious tongue  
Uttering a language foreign to your heart,  
Are ye not ever caught ? Perdition seize you !  
Death is less grievous than thou deem'st to me  
Who date my utter ruin from that hour  
When Ilion's wretched city was involved  
In the same fate with my illustrious lord,  
Whose spear oft drove thee trembling from the  
field

Into thy ships : but now against his wife  
A formidable warrior art thou come  
To murder me : strike, for this coward tongue  
Shall never leave thine and thy daughter's shame  
Unpublished. If in Sparta thou art great,  
So was I erst in Ilion ; but exult not  
In my disasters, for on thee ere long  
The same reverse of fortune may attend.



## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I. 1.

Two rival consorts ne'er can I approve,  
Or sons, the source of strife, their birth who owe  
To different mothers ; hence connubial love  
Is banished, and the mansion teems with woe.  
One blooming nymph let cautious husbands wed,  
And share with her alone an unpolluted bed.

## I. 2.

No prudent city, no well-governed state,  
More than a single potentate will own ;  
Their subjects droop beneath the grievous weight  
When two bear rule, and discord shakes the throne ;  
And if two bards awake their sounding lyres  
E'en the harmonious Muse a cruel strife inspires,

## II. 1.

To aid the bark, when prosperous gales arise,  
Two jarring pilots shall misguide the helm :  
Weak is a multitude when all are wise,  
One simpler monarch could have saved the realm.  
Let a sole chief the house or empire sway,  
And all who hope for bliss their lord's behests obey,

## II. 2.

This truth hath Menelaus' daughter shown,  
Furious she comes the victim to destroy ;  
And, that their blood may nuptial wrongs atone,  
The Phrygian captive, and that hapless boy,  
With impious rage unjust would cause to bleed ;  
May pity, awful queen, thy lifted arm impede !

But I before these doors behold the pair  
On whom the fatal sentence now is passed.  
Thou wretched dame, and wretched child who diest  
Because thy mother to a foreign bed  
By force was dragged, in her imputed guilt  
Thou wert not an accomplice, thou thy lords  
Hast not offended.

*Andro.* To the realms beneath,  
Lo, I am hurried, with these bloody hands  
Fast bound in galling chains.

*Moloss.* I too, O mother,  
Under thy wing, to those loathed shades descend  
A victim. O ye lords of Phthia's land,  
And thou, my father, succour those thou lov'st.

*Andro.* Cling to thy mother's bosom, O my child,  
Together let us die.

*Moloss.* Ah me ! how grievous  
My sufferings are ! too clearly I perceive  
That I, and thou my mother, both are wretched.

*Mene.* Go both together to th' infernal realm :  
For ye from hostile turrets hither came.  
Although the cause why you and he must bleed  
Is not the same, my sentence takes away  
Your life, and my Hermione's your son's.  
The highest folly were it to permit  
A foe to live and vex us, whom with ease  
We might despatch, and from our house remove  
Such danger.

*Andro.* O my husband, would to Heaven  
I had thy arm to aid me ; and thy spear,  
Thou son of Priam.

*Moloss.* Wretched me ! what charm  
Can I devise t' avert impending fate ?

*Andro.* My son, implore the mercy of our lord  
Clasping his knees.

*Moloss.* Dear monarch, spare my life.

*Andro.* Tears from these eyes burst forth like trickling drops  
By the sun's heat forced from a solid rock,  
Wretch that I am !

*Moloss.* What remedy, alas !  
For these dire evils can my soul devise ?

*Mene.* Why dost thou idly grovel at my feet  
With fruitless supplications, while I stand  
Firm as a rock, or as th' un pitying wave ?  
Such conduct serves my interests : no affection  
To thee I bear, because my morn of life  
Was wasted in the conflict, ere I took  
Troy and thy mother, whose society  
Thou in the realms of Pluto shalt enjoy.

PELEUS, MENELAUS, ANDROMACHE, MOLOSSUS, CHORUS,

*Chorus.* Peleus, I see, draws near, his aged feet  
With eager haste advancing.

*Peleus.* You, and him  
Who stands presiding o'er a murderous deed,  
What means this uproar that disturbs the house,  
I question, and what practices are these  
Ye carry on unauthorized by law?  
O Menelaus, stay thy furious hand,  
And let not execution thus outstrip  
All righteous judgment. O my friends, lead on;  
For such a dread emergency appears  
T' admit of no delay. Could I regain  
That youthful vigour which I erst enjoyed  
As prosperous breezes aid the floating sails,  
This captive would I favour. Say, what right  
Have they to bind your hands, and drag along  
You and your son? for like the bleating mother,  
Led forth to slaughter with her lamb, you perish,  
While I and your unwitting lord are absent.

*Andro.* They, as thou seest, O venerable man,  
Me and my son thus bear to instant death.  
What shall I say to thee, whom I with speed  
Not by one single messenger but thousands  
Have sent for? sure thou, of the fatal strife  
In these divided mansions, with his daughter,  
To which I owe my ruin, must have heard:  
And from the violated shrine of Thetis,  
Who bore to thee a noble son, the goddess  
Whom thou rever'st e'en now with brutal force  
Me have they torn, nor judged my cause, nor wait  
For absent Neoptolemus, but, knowing  
That I and that this child who hath committed  
No fault, are left alone and unprotected,  
Would slay us both. But, O thou aged man,  
Thus prostrate on my knees, to thee I sue,  
And, though this hand must not presume to touch  
Thy honoured beard, conjure thee by the gods,  
Rescue us, or to thy eternal shame  
Both he and I must miserably bleed.

*Peleus.* My orders are that you those galling chains

Unbind and loose her hands, else will I make  
The disobedient weep.

*Mene.* But I, your equal,  
Who have much more authority o'er her,  
Forbid them.

*Peleus.* Com'st thou hither to direct  
My household? is it not enough for thee  
To rule thy Spartans?

*Mene.* Her I took at Troy.

*Peleus.* She, to reward his valour, was bestowed  
Upon my grandson.

*Mene.* Doth not all he owns,  
To me, and what is mine, to him belong?

*Peleus.* For honest purposes, but not for crimes  
And murderous violence.

*Mene.* You ne'er shall take her  
Out of my hands.

*Peleus.* Thy head I with this sceptre  
Will smite.

*Mene.* Draw near; if you presume to touch me,  
Soon shall you rue such outrage.

*Peleus.* O thou villain,  
Sprung from a race of impious sires, what right  
To be accounted an illustrious man,  
And numbered with the truly brave, hast thou,  
Who by a Phrygian wanderer wert deprived  
Of thy fair consort, after thou hadst left  
Thy house unbarred and destitute of guards,  
As if thou in thy mansions hadst possessed  
A virtuous dame, though she of all her sex  
Was the most dissolute? nor if she would  
Can any Spartan nymph be chaste? for wandering  
From their own homes, distinguished by bare legs,  
And zoneless vest, they with young men contend  
In swiftness and in wrestling; I such customs  
Hold in abhorrence. Is there any room  
For wonder if the women prove unchaste  
Whom thus you educate? thy Helen ought  
To have proposed these questions, ere she left  
Her native realm, regardless of thy love,  
And by that youthful paramour seduced,  
Wantonly fled into a foreign land.

Yet for her sake didst thou that numerous host  
Of Greeks collect, and lead them to assail  
The Phrygian ramparts. Thou that beauteous dame  
Shouldst rather have despised, nor in her cause  
Wielded the javelin, when thou found'st her worthless,  
But suffered her in Ilion to remain,  
And sent rich gifts to Paris on these terms,  
That to thy house she never should return.  
But thou, instead of suffering these just motives  
To make their due impression on thy soul,  
Full many valiant warriors hast destroyed,  
Made th' aged matron childless, and deprived  
Of his illustrious sons the hoary sire.  
Numbered with those who owe to thee thy ruin  
Am wretched I : for like some evil genius  
In thee do these indignant eyes behold  
The murderer of Achilles : thou alone,  
Save by the missile shaft, unwounded cam'st  
From Ilion's hostile shores ; in burnished chests  
Didst thou bear thither the same glittering arms  
Which thou bear'st back again. Before he wedded,  
I warned my grandson to form no connection  
With thee, nor into these abodes admit  
The brood of that adult'ress ; for the daughters  
Their mother emulate in deeds of shame.  
Look well to this, ye suitors, and select  
The damsel with maternal worth endued.  
Then with what scorn didst thou thy brother treat,  
Commanding him 'gainst reason to transgress,  
And sacrifice his daughter. Thou such fears,  
Lest thou that execrable wife shouldst lose,  
Didst entertain. When thou hadst taken Troy,  
This too I urge against thee, though thou hadst  
Thy consort in thy power, thou didst not slay her,  
But when her throbbing bosom thou beheld'st  
Didst cast away thy sword, receive her kisses,  
And soothe the fears of her who had betrayed thee.  
O worthless miscreant, whom the Cyprian Queen  
Hath thus debased ! thou after this intrud'st  
Into my grandson's palace, in his absence  
Committ'st these outrages, and basely slay'st  
A miserable woman, and her child,

Thee and thy daughter who shall cause to weep  
Though trebly illegitimate his birth.  
Oft the parched heath, when duly tilled, exceeds  
The richest soil, and greater instances  
Of virtue are in many a bastard found  
Than in the lawfully begotten race.  
But take thy daughter hence. Far better is it  
To form affinity and strictest friendship  
With a poor man of worth, than him who joins  
Iniquity with wealth ; but as for thee,  
Thou art a thing of nought.

*Chorus.* Among mankind,

Oft from a small beginning doth the tongue  
Great strife occasion : but the wise beware  
Of entering on a contest with their friend.

*Mene.* Why do we speak in such exalted terms  
Of aged men, as if they were endued  
With wisdom, though in former days supposed  
By the whole Grecian race to judge aright ?  
When you, O Peleus, who derive your birth  
From an illustrious sire, and with my house  
So nearly are connected, hold a language  
Disgraceful to yourself, and slander me,  
For a barbarian dame, whom from this land  
You ought to banish far beyond the Nile,  
Beyond the Phasis, and applaud my vengeance ;  
Because she comes from Asiatic shores,  
Where many valiant Grecian chiefs lie slain.  
And hath in part been guilty of the blood  
Of your famed son ; for Paris, by whose shaft,  
Transpierced, Achilles perished, was the brother,  
And she the wife of Hector : yet you enter  
The same abode with her, the genial board  
With her partake, allow her to bring forth  
Under your roofs an execrable brood.  
These mischiefs both to you and me, old man,  
Foreseeing, have I snatched her from your hands  
With a design to kill her. But, O say,  
(For there is nought of meanness in our holding  
This conference), if my daughter bear no child,  
And she have sons, will you appoint them lords  
Of this your Phthian land ? shall they who spring

From a barbarian race, o'er Greeks bear rule?  
 Am I, because I hate injustice, void  
 Of understanding, and are you discreet?  
 Reflect on this; had you bestowed your daughter  
 On any citizen, were she thus treated,  
 Would you sit down and bear her wrongs in silence?  
 I deem you would not. Why then with such harshness  
 Speak you in favour of a foreign dame  
 Against your nearest friends? as great a right  
 To vengeance as her husband, hath the wife  
 Whom her lord injures: for while he whose doors  
 An unchaste consort enters, in his hands  
 Hath power to right himself, a woman's strength  
 Lies only in her parents and her friends.  
 My daughter, therefore, am I bound to aid:  
 You show the marks of age: for while you talk  
 Of that famed war I waged, you more befriend me  
 Than if you had been silent. Deep in woe  
 Was Helen plunged, not by her own consent  
 But by the gods: and this event hath proved  
 To Greece most advantageous, for its sons  
 Who knew not how till then to wield the spear,  
 Grew valiant. From experience, best of tutors,  
 Men gather all the knowledge they possess.  
 But when I saw my consort, in forbearing  
 To take away her life, I acted wisely:  
 And would that you had done like me, nor slain  
 Your brother Phocus; this to you I speak  
 Through mere benevolence, and not in wrath:  
 But if resentment o'er your soul usurp  
 An empire, such intemperance of the tongue  
 Will be in you more shameful, while my wishes  
 I by a prudent forethought shall attain.

*Chorus.* Now both desist (for this were better far)  
 From such unprofitable strife of words,  
 O ye will both offend.

*Peleus.* Ah me! through Greece  
 What mischievous opinions have prevailed!  
 When with the spoils of vanquished foes, the host  
 A trophy rear, they think not how 'twas gained  
 By those brave soldiers who endure the toil  
 Of battle, while their general bears away

All the renown : though he was only one  
Who stood 'midst thousands brandishing his spear,  
Nor any single combatant surpassed,  
He gains a larger portion of applause.  
The venerable rulers of a city,  
Placed in exalted stations, yet devoid  
Of any real merit, overlook  
The populace, though many in the crowd  
Of their inferiors are more wise than they,  
If haply courage and an honest zeal  
Unite to place them in the public view.  
Thou and thy brother thus are swollen with pride,  
From having led those troops to conquer Troy,  
And triumph in the sufferings of your friends.  
But henceforth will I teach thee not to look  
On Paris, Ida's shepherd, as a foe,  
More terrible than Peleus. If with speed  
Thou quit not these abodes, and take away  
Thy childless daughter, my indignant grandson,  
By her dishevelled hair around the palace  
Will drag this barren dame, who stung with envy,  
Cannot endure the fruitful mother's joys.  
But, if she prove so luckless as to bare  
No issue, ought she therefore to deprive us  
Of our posterity? Begone, ye slaves,  
That I may see who dares obstruct my loosing  
Her hands. Rise up : though trembling with old age,  
Your chains can I unbind. O worthless man,  
Hast thou thus galled her hands? didst thou suppose  
Thou held'st a bull or lion in the snare?  
Or didst thou shudder lest she should snatch up  
A sword, and wreak just vengeance on thy head?  
Come hither to these sheltering arms, my child,  
Unbind thy mother's chains ; in Phthia, thee  
I'll educate, to them a bitter foe.  
Should Sparta's sons by the protended spear  
Obtain no fame, nor in th' embattled field  
Their prowess signalize, be well assured  
Ye have no other merit.

*Chorus.*

Old men talk

With freedom, and their vehemence of soul  
Is hard to be restrained.



*Mene.*

Extremely prone

Are you to slander ; much against my will  
 I came to Phthia, and am here resolved  
 That I will neither do nor suffer aught  
 Disgraceful : but to my own home with speed  
 Am I returning, and have little time  
 In vain debates to lavish : for a city  
 Not far from Sparta's gates and erst a friend  
 Is waging war against us : I would lead  
 My hardy squadrons forth t' assail the foe,  
 And utterly subdue them. To my wish  
 Soon as this great affair I shall have settled,  
 Hither will I return, and face to face,  
 When I my reasons to my son-in-law  
 Have in the clearest terms proposed, will hear  
 What he can urge ; and if he punish her,  
 And for the future courteously to me  
 Demean himself, from me he in return  
 Shall meet with courtesy ; but if he rage,  
 He of my rage the dire effects shall feel :  
 For still such treatment as his deeds deserve  
 Shall he experience. But I am not hurt  
 By these injurious words of yours ; for like  
 Some disembodied ghost, you have a voice,  
 Although you are not able to do aught  
 But merely speak.

[Exit MENELAUS]

*Peleus.*

Lead on, my boy ; here take

Thy station under these protecting arms ;  
 And thou too, O thou miserable dame,  
 Driven hither by the furious storm ; at length  
 Into a quiet haven are ye come.

*Andro.*

On thee and thy descendants may the gods  
 Shower every blessing, venerable man,  
 For having saved this child, and wretched me ;  
 Yet O beware, lest in some lonely spot  
 They suddenly assail us, and by force  
 Drag me away, perceiving thou art old,  
 That I am a weak woman, and my son  
 Is but an infant : all precautions use,  
 Else we, who have escaped them, may again  
 Be caught.

*Peleus.*

Forbear to utter, in such language

As this, the dictates of a woman's fear.  
Advance, who dares to touch you? he shall weep.  
For with the blessing of th' immortal gods,  
And by unnumbered troops of valiant horse,  
And infantry supported, I bear rule  
Over the Phthian land. I am robust,  
Nor, as you deem, impaired by palsied age.  
Were I, opposed in battle, but to look  
On such a man as this, old as I am,  
An easy conquest soon should I obtain.  
Superior is the veteran, if with courage  
Inspired, to many youths: for what avails  
A vigorous body with a coward's heart?  
[*Exeunt PELEUS, ANDROMACHE, and MOLOSSUS.*

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I.

My wish were this; or never to be born,  
Or to descend from generous sires, and share  
The blessings which attend a wealthy heir.  
If heaviest woes assail, ne'er left forlorn  
Without a friend are they of nobler race,  
Hereditary trophies deck their head:  
The records of the brave with joy we trace,  
No distant age their memory can efface,  
For virtue's torch unquenched pours radiance o'er the  
dead.

## II.

Better is conquest, when we gain our right  
By no reproachful means, no deeds of shame,  
Than if to envy we expose our fame,  
And trample on the laws with impious might.  
Such laurels which at first too sweetly bloom,  
Ere long are withered by the frost of time,  
And scorn pursues their wearers to the tomb.  
I in my household or the state presume  
To seek that power alone which rules without a crime.

## III.

O veteran, sprung from Æacus, thy spear  
 Chilled the Lapithæ with fear,  
 And from their hills the Centaurs drove.  
 When glory called, and prosperous gales  
 Swelled the Argo's daring sails,  
 Intrepid didst thou pass that strait  
 Where ruin oft the crashing bark attends,  
 And ocean's foam descends  
 From the Symplegades' obstructing height.  
 Next didst thou land on perjured Ilion's shore,  
 With Hercules illustrious son of Jove,  
 Then first its bulwarks streamed with gore:  
 Till crowned with fame a partner of his toil,  
 Europe again thou sought'st and Phthia's frozen soil.

## THE NURSE OF HERMIONE, CHORUS.

*Nurse.* How doth a rapid series of events  
 The most disastrous, O my dearest friends,  
 This day invade us! for within these doors  
 Hermione my mistress, by her sire  
 Forsaken, and grown conscious of the guilt  
 She hath incurred, by that attempt to murder  
 Andromache and her unhappy son,  
 Resolves to die, because she dreads, lest fired  
 With indignation at her guilt, her lord  
 Should cast her forth with scorn, or take away  
 Her life, because she purposed to have slain  
 The innocent. The servants who attend  
 Can hardly by their vigilance prevent her  
 From fixing round her neck the deadly noose,  
 Or snatch the dagger from her hand, so great  
 Is her affliction, and she now confesses  
 That she has done amiss. My strength's exhausted  
 In striving to withhold my royal mistress  
 From perishing by an ignoble death.  
 But enter ye these mansions, and attempt  
 To save her life, for strangers can persuade  
 Far better than old friends.

*Chorus.* We hear the voice  
 Of her attendants from within confirm

Th' intelligence thou hither cam'st to bring :  
That hapless woman seems just on the point  
Of showing with what rage she by her guilt  
Is hurried on : for lo, she rushes forth  
From yon abodes, already hath she 'scaped  
Her servants' hands, and is resolved to die.

## HERMIONE, NURSE, CHORUS.

*Herm.* Ah me ! these ringlets how will I tear off,  
How rend my cheeks !

*Nurse.* What mean'st thou, O my daughter ?  
Wilt thou thus injure that fair frame ?

*Herm.* Away,  
O thou slight veil, I pluck thee from my head,  
And toss thy scattered fragments in the air.

*Nurse.* Cover thy bosom with the decent robe.

*Herm.* Why with a robe my bosom should I hide ?  
The crimes I have committed 'gainst my lord  
Are clear, well known, and cannot be concealed.

*Nurse.* Grief'st thou because thou hast formed schemes to  
slay  
Thy rival ?

*Herm.* I with many groans bewail  
Those hostile darings, execrable wretch,  
Wretch that I am, an object of just hate  
To all mankind.

*Nurse.* Thy husband such offence  
Will pardon.

*Herm.* From my hand why didst thou snatch  
The sword ? Restore, restore it, O my friends,  
That I this bosom may transpierce. Why force me  
To quit yon pendant noose ?

*Nurse.* In thy distraction  
Shall I forsake and leave thee thus to die ?

*Herm.* Where shall I find (inform me, O ye Fates)  
The blazing pyre, ascend the craggy rock,  
Plunge in the billows, or amidst the woods  
On a steep mountain waste the life I loathe,  
That after death the gods beneath may take me  
To their protection ?

*Chorus.* Why wouldst thou make efforts

So violent? some mischiefs sent by Heaven  
Sooner or later visit all mankind.

*Herm.* Me like a stranded bark, thou, O my sire,  
Hast left forsaken and without an oar.  
To thee I owe my ruin. I no longer  
In these my bridal mansions can reside.  
To the propitious statues of what God  
With suppliant haste shall I repair, or fall  
At a slave's knees, myself an abject slave?  
I from the land of Phthia, like a bird  
Upborne on azure wings, would speed my flight,  
Or imitate that ship whose dashing oars  
'Twixt the Cyanean straits first urged their way.

*Nurse.* As little, O my daughter, can I praise  
That vehemence which caused thee to transgress  
Against the Trojan dame, as these thy fears  
Which are immoderate. For such slight offence  
Thy lord, misled by the pernicious tongue  
Of a barbarian woman, from his couch  
Will not expel thee: for thou art not his  
By right of conquest, borne from vanquished Troy;  
But thee, the daughter of a mighty king,  
He with abundant dower, and from a city,  
Most flourishing, received: nor will thy sire,  
His child forsaking, as thou dread'st, permit thee  
To be cast forth: but enter these abodes,  
Nor show thyself without, lest some affront  
Thou shouldst receive if haply thou art seen  
Before these doors. [Exit NURSE]

*Chorus.* Behold a man, whose dress  
Is of such different fashion that it speaks  
The foreigner, comes swiftly from the gate.

ORESTES, HERMIONE, CHORUS.

*Orestes.* Is this th' abode of great Achilles' son,  
The regal mansion, O ye foreign dames?

*Chorus.* It is as thou hast said. But who art thou  
That ask'st this question?

*Orestes.* Agamemnon's son,  
And Clytemnestra's; but my name's Orestes:  
I to Dodona, th' oracle of Jove,

Am on my road ; but since I now have reached  
The land of Phthia, first would I inquire  
How fares Hermione, the Spartan dame,  
My kinswoman ; doth she yet live and prosper ?  
For though from me far distant be the land  
In which she now resides, she still is dear.

*Herm.* O son of Agamemnon, who thus make  
Your seasonable appearance, like the haven  
To mariners amidst a furious storm,  
Take pity, I implore you by those knees,  
On me a wretch whose inauspicious fortunes  
You witness. Hence round your knees I fling  
These arms, which ought to prove of equal  
force

With hallowed branches by the suppliant borne.

*Orestes.* What's this ? am I deceived ? or do my eyes  
Indeed behold the queen of these abodes,  
And Menelaus' daughter ?

*Herm.* Th' only child  
Whom to the Spartan monarch Helen bore.  
Mistake me not.

*Orestes.* O Phœbus, healing power,  
Protect us ! But what dire mischance hath happened ?  
Or from the gods, or human foes, proceed  
The evils thou endur'st ?

*Herm.* Some from myself,  
But others from the husband whom I wedded,  
The rest from one of the immortal gods.  
I utterly am ruined.

*Orestes.* What afflictions  
Can any woman who's yet childless feel  
But those which from her nuptial union spring ?

*Herm.* Hence these distempers of the soul arise,  
And well do you anticipate my words.

*Orestes.* Enamoured with another, is thy lord  
False to thy bed ?

*Herm.* He loves a captive dame,  
The wife of Hector.

*Orestes.* This of which thou speak'st  
Is a great evil, when one man possesses  
Two wives.

*Herm.* 'Twas thus, till I avenged the wrong.

*Orestes.* Didst thou with arts familiar to thy sex  
Plot 'gainst thy rival's life?

*Herm.* I would have killed  
Her and her spurious son.

*Orestes.* Hast thou despatched them?  
Or were they screened from their impending fate?

*Herm.* Old Peleus to these worthless objects showed  
Too great a reverence.

*Orestes.* Was there any friend  
Ready to aid thee in the purposed slaughter?

*Herm.* My sire, who from this cause for Sparta came.

*Orestes.* Yet by that aged man was he subdued?

*Herm.* Abashed he fled, and left me here alone.

*Orestes.* I understand thee well: thy husband's wrath  
Thou fear'st for what thou'st done.

*Herm.* The fact you know:

Hence justly will he take away my life.  
What can be said? yet by immortal Jove,  
Our grandsire, I conjure you, send me far  
From these domains, or to my father's house.  
Had but these walls a voice, they would proclaim  
The sentence of my exile, for the land  
Of Phthia hates me. If my lord return  
From Phœbus' oracle, for the misdeeds  
I have committed, he will strike me dead,  
Or force me to become that harlot's slave  
Whom erst I ruled.

*Orestes.* By some will it be asked  
Whence then into such errors didst thou fall?

*Herm.* My ruin I derive from the admission  
Of these vile women, who inflamed my pride  
By uttering these rash words: "Wilt thou endure  
Beneath thy roof that odious slave who shares  
Thy bridal couch? by Juno, awful queen,  
I would not suffer such a wretch to breathe  
In my polluted chamber." When I heard  
The language uttered by these crafty sirens,  
Artificers of mischief, who, to suit  
Their purpose, in persuasive strains displayed  
The power of eloquence, I was puffed up  
With folly: for what need had I to hold  
My lord in reverence while possessed of all

That I could wish ? abundant wealth was mine,  
O'er these abodes I reigned, and any children  
I to my husband might hereafter bare  
Would be legitimate ; but hers, by mine  
In strict subjection held, a spurious race.  
But never, never (I this truth repeat)  
Should wedded men, who have the gift of reason,  
Let women have a free access, and visit  
Their consort. For they teach her evil lessons :  
Urged by the hopes of lucre, one corrupts  
Her chastity ; a second hath already  
Transgressed herself, and wishes that her friend  
May be as vicious : many by their lust  
Are led astray : hence to their husband's house  
A train of mischief rises. Guard the doors  
Of your abodes with locks and massive bars ;  
Since from the intrusion of these female guests,  
No good, but mischiefs numberless ensue.

*Chorus.* Thou to thy tongue hast given too free a scope  
In thus aspersing the whole female race :  
Thy present woes indeed our pardon claim ;  
Yet every woman is in duty bound  
To gloss o'er the misconduct of her sex.

*Orestes.* Wisdom pertained to him who taught mankind  
To hear the reasons by both parties urged  
In a debate. Aware of the confusion  
In these abodes, and of the strife 'twixt thee  
And Hector's wife, I stayed not to observe  
Whether thou in this house wouldst still remain,  
Or through a fear of yonder captive dame  
Abandon it : I therefore hither came,  
Nor waited for intelligence from thee.  
And if a satisfactory account  
Of thy proceedings thou to me canst give,  
I will convey thee hence. For thou, who erst  
Wert mine, with this thy present husband liv'st,  
Through the perfidious conduct of thy sire,  
Who ere he entered the domains of Troy  
Affianced thee to me, and then to him  
Who now possesses thee, again engaged,  
If he the Phrygian city should subdue.  
But I forgive thy father for this wrong,



When hither great Achilles' son returned,  
 And to the bridegroom sued that he would loose  
 Thy plighted hand ; of all my various fortunes  
 Informing him, and of my present woes ;  
 How feasible it were for me to wed  
 Among my friends, but that for such an exile  
 As I am, driven from my paternal throne,  
 'Twould not be easy to obtain a consort  
 In any foreign land : on this he grew  
 More arrogant, and bitterly reproached me  
 Both with my mother's murder, and those Furies  
 Whose blood-stained visages inspire dismay.  
 By the misfortunes of my house bowed down  
 To earth, I grieved indeed, but grieving bore  
 The weight of these calamities, and reft  
 Of thee my bride, reluctantly departed.  
 But since thy fortunes now have undergone  
 A change so unexpected, and involved  
 In woe, thou stand'st aghast ; from these abodes  
 Thee will I take and to thy sire convey,  
 For wondrous is the force of kindred ties ;  
 And in misfortunes nought exceeds the friend  
 Who from the self-same house derives his birth.

*Herm.* My father will take care how to dispose  
 Of me in marriage, nor is it my province  
 Such question to decide. But, O convey me  
 From these loathed mansions with the utmost  
 speed,

Lest when my husband at his first return  
 Enters the doors, he intercept my flight ;  
 Or, hearing that I leave his grandson's house,  
 Peleus pursue me with his rapid steeds.

*Orestes.* Be of good cheer against that aged man,  
 And from thy furious lord, Achilles' son,  
 Who treated me with scorn, fear nought ; this hand  
 Hath with such cautious artifice prepared  
 For him th' inevitable snares of death,  
 Of which no previous mention will I make :  
 But when it is accomplished, this exploit  
 Shall on the rock of Delphi be proclaimed.  
 I who my mother slew, if th' armed friends  
 Whom I have stationed in the Pythian realm

Observe their oaths, will teach him that he ought  
To have abstained from wedding any dame  
Betrothed to me. He in an evil hour  
Shall claim atonement for his father's death  
Of Phœbus mighty king; nor shall repentance  
For these audacious blasphemies avail  
To save the miscreant on whose impious head  
Apollo wreaks just vengeance; by his wrath  
O'ertaken, and entangled in my snares,  
He wretchedly shall perish. For the gods  
Subvert the prosperous fortunes of their foes  
Nor suffer pride to rear her towering crest.

[*Exeunt ORESTES and HERMIONE*]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

Phœbus, thou god who with a mound  
Of stately towers didst Ilion's rock surround;  
And thou, O Neptune, ruler of the main,  
Borne swiftly by thy azure steeds  
In a light car, who cleav'st the watery plain  
After exerting with unwearied toil  
Such skill as human works exceeds,  
'Gainst wretched Troy when Mars his javelin bore,  
Why, faithless to that chosen soil,  
Left ye your city drenched in gore?

I. 2.

The steeds ye yoked on Simois' banks  
Whirled many a chariot through the broken ranks;  
No hero gathered in that stubborn fray  
One laurel to adorn his head:  
Phrygia's illustrious rulers swept away,  
Took their last voyage to a distant shore,  
And mingled with the vulgar dead,  
While the polluted altars ceased to gleam  
Upwasting to the skies no more  
Their frankincense in odorous steam.

## II. 1.

Slain by his wife Atrides fell ;  
 His furious son sent to the shades of Hell  
 The murderess, and returned th' unnatural deed,  
     That fatal stroke the god approved,  
 His oracles ordained that she should bleed,  
 When young Orestes at the inmost shrine  
     Was by a heavenly impulse moved,  
 His hands in gore maternal to imbrue.  
 O Phœbus, O thou power divine,  
 How shall I think th' assertion true ?

## II. 2.

In Greece doth many a dame complain  
 Chaunting rude dirges for her children slain ;  
 Others their native land reluctant leave,  
     And to a foreign lord are brought.  
 Nor yet hast thou alone just cause to grieve,  
 Nor to thy friends hath Heaven's peculiar hate  
     These signal miseries wrought :  
 Victorious Greece still feels as deep a wound,  
     From whence the thunderbolt of fate  
     Through Phrygia scattered deaths around.

## PELEUS, CHORUS.

*Peleus.* Answer my questions, O ye Plithian dames,  
 For doubtful is the rumour I have heard,  
 That Menelaus' daughter, when she left  
 This house departed from the realm. I come  
 Anxious to learn if this account be true.  
 For 'tis their duty who remain at home  
 To guard the fortunes of their absent friends.

*Chorus.* What thou hast heard, O Peleus, is the truth,  
 And ill would it become me to conceal  
 The woes in which I deeply am involved :  
 Our royal mistress from these walls is fled.

*Peleus.* What feared she ? say.

*Chorus.* The anger of her lord,  
 Lest he from these abodes should cast her forth.

*Peleus.* Because she plotted to have slain the boy ?

*Chorus.* E'en so it was. Yon captive too she dreaded,

*Peleus.* But from these mansions did she go, attended,  
Or by her father or by whom?

*Chorus.* The son  
Of Agamemnon from this land conveyed her.

*Peleus.* What are his views? to take her for his bride?

*Chorus.* Thy grandson too he meditates to slay.

*Peleus.* Stationed in secret ambush, or resolved  
To meet the dauntless warrior face to face?

*Chorus.* Beneath Apollo's unpolluted fane  
With Delphi's citizens.

*Peleus.* Atrocious crime!  
Ah me! will no one with his utmost speed  
Go to the altar of the Pythian god,  
And to our friends disclose what passes here,  
Ere by his foes Achilles' son is slain?

MESSENGER, PELEUS, CHORUS.

*Mess.* What evil tidings do I bring to you,  
O aged man, and all my master's friends!

*Peleus.* By a sad presage which affects my soul.  
I of th' impending evil am forewarned.

*Mess.* Know then, O Peleus, that your wretched grandson  
Is now no more, with such unnumbered wounds  
He by the Delphic citizens transpierced,  
And by that stranger from Mycene died.

*Chorus.* Alas! alas! but what resource is left  
For thee, thou hoary veteran? do not fall;  
Raise thyself up.

*Peleus.* To very nothing now  
Am I reduced, I utterly am ruined:  
The power of speech deserts me, and these limbs  
Forget their office.

*Mess.* Hear me, and from earth  
Arise, if, with th' assistance of your friends,  
You for this murder wish to be revenged.

*Peleus.* How hast thou compassed wretched me, who stand  
On the last verge of spiritless old age,  
O cruel fate! say how the only son  
Of my deceased, my only son, was slain.  
These tidings though unwelcome would I hear.

*Mess.* After we reached Apollo's sacred realm,

While thrice the chariot of the sun performed  
Its bright career, we satiated our eyes  
With viewing all around. The circumstance  
Which raised suspicion first, was this: the people  
Who dwell within the temple of the god  
Held frequent meetings, and in crowds assembled  
Meanwhile the son of Agamemnon went  
Through the whole city, and in every ear  
Whispered malignant words like these: "Behold  
Him who is visiting the hallowed shrine  
Of Phœbus piled with gold, the treasures given  
By all mankind; the miscreant comes again  
On the same purpose which first drew him hither,  
To overthrow the temple of the god."  
Through the whole city hence an evil rumour  
Went forth, and all the magistrates, to whom  
The holy treasures were consigned, assembled,  
In secret councils heard, and placed a guard  
Behind the massive columns in the fane.  
We unapprized of this, meantime had caught  
Some sheep, that fed amid Parnassus' grove,  
And with our Delphic friends and Pythian seers  
Approached the altar: some one said: "Young man,  
What vows on thy behalf shall we address  
To Phœbus? for what purpose art thou come?"  
He answered: "To the god I wish to make  
A due atonement for my past offence,  
Because I erst from him with impious tongue  
Claimed satisfaction for my father's blood."  
Hence did Orestes' calumnies appear  
To have great weight, suggesting that my lord  
Spoke an untruth, and that he hither came  
With vile designs. Beneath the holy roof,  
That to Apollo he might offer up  
His prayers in that oracular abode,  
He now advanced, and as they blazed, observed  
The victims: here a troop with falchions armed  
Screened by the branching laurels stood; the son  
Of Clytemnestra was the sole contriver  
Of all these stratagems. Our lord stood forth,  
And, in the sight of this insidious band,  
Adored the god: while they with their keen swords,

Ere he discerned them, pierced Achilles' son  
Unsheathed in mail. He instantly retreated ;  
For he as yet had by no deadly wound  
Been smitten ; but snatched up in his retreat  
Those glittering arms which near the portals hung,  
And stood a champion terrible to view,  
Close to the blazing altar ; with loud voice  
He questioned the inhabitants of Delphi :  
" Me who a pious votary hither come,  
Why, or for what offences, would ye slay ! "  
Although the number of his foes was great,  
None of them answered, but all hands hurled stones :  
On every side assaulted by a storm  
Thick as the falling snows, he ward off,  
Extending the broad margin of his shield,  
Each missile weapon : but of no avail  
Was this resistance : for the spear, the shaft,  
The dart, were thrown at once, and at his feet  
Mixed instruments of sacrifice lay scattered.  
Th' agility with which your grandson shunned  
The blows they aimed, was wondrous to behold :  
They in a circle gathering round, closed in,  
Nor gave him space to breathe, till from the altar  
Descending with a leap like that which bore  
The hapless Grecian chief to Phrygia's coast,  
He rushed among them : like a flock of doves  
Who see the hawk appear, they turned and fled :  
In heaps on heaps promiscuous, many fell,  
Some in the narrow passage wounded lay,  
While others o'er them trampled, and their groans  
Unholy echoed through the hallowed dome.  
But, tranquil as the waters in a calm,  
In golden arms my lord resplendent stood,  
Till from the inmost sanctuary burst forth  
A deep-toned voice of horror, which impelled  
The recreant warriors to renew the fight :  
Achilles' son then smitten through the flank  
With a keen sword, by one of Delphi fell,  
Who slew him, yet ignobly, with the aid  
Of multitudes. But after he to earth  
Was fallen, what sword transpierced him not, what hand  
Threw not a stone to smite him ? his whole frame,

So graceful erst, was with unnumbered wounds  
 Disfigured : till at length his mangled corse,  
 Which stained the altar's basis, from the fane  
 Drenched with the blood of victims they cast forth.  
 But gathering up with speed, his loved remains  
 To you we bear, O venerable man,  
 That o'er them you may shed the plenteous tear,  
 And grace them with sepulchral rites. Thus Phoebus,  
 Who prophesies to others, mighty king,  
 And deals out justice to th' admiring world,  
 Hath on Achilles' son revenged himself,  
 And, like some worthless human foe, revived  
 An ancient grudge : how then can he be wise ?

[Exit MESSENGER]

*Chorus.* But lo ! our royal master, from the land  
 Of Delphi borne, approaches these abodes !  
 Wretched was he, by such untimely doom  
 O'ertaken : nor art thou, O aged man,  
 Less wretched than the slaughtered youth : for thou  
 Into thy doors receiv'st Achilles' son,  
 But not as thou couldst wish ; thou too art fallen  
 Into affliction's snare.

*Peleus.* What piteous object,  
 Ah me ! do I behold, and with these hands  
 Receive into my house ! we are undone,  
 We are undone, O thou Thessalian city ;  
 I have no children, no descendants left,  
 To occupy these mansions. On what friend  
 Shall I a wretched sufferer turn my eyes,  
 And hope to find relief ? O thou dear face,  
 Ye cheeks, ye hands ! thee would to Heaven that  
 fate

In those embattled fields of Troy had slain  
 Beside the waves of Simois !

*Chorus.* He in death  
 Hence would have found renown ; thou too, old man,  
 Wouldst have been happier.

*Peleus.* Thou, O wedlock, wedlock,  
 These mansions and my city hast o'erthrown.  
 My grandson, through the inauspicious nuptials  
 By thee contracted, would to heaven my gates  
 Had ne'er received that execrable fiend

Hermione, thy bane ! O had she first  
With thunderbolts been smitten ! nor hadst thou,  
Presumptuous mortal, charged the Delphic god  
With having aimed the shaft which slew thy sire !

*Chorus.* I will awake the sad funereal dirge,  
And wailing pay to my departed lord  
Such customary tribute as attends  
The shades of mighty chiefs.

*Peleus.* Ah me ! at once  
With misery and old age bowed down to earth,  
I shed th' incessant tear.

*Chorus.* Thus hath the god  
Ordained, the god's vindictive arm hath wrought  
All these calamities.

*Peleus.* O most beloved,  
This house, ah me ! a desert hast thou left,  
And me a miserable old man made childless.

*Chorus.* Before thy children, O thou aged man,  
Thou shouldst have died.

*Peleus.* Shall I not rend my hair,  
And beat with desperate hands this hoary head ?  
O city ! Phœbus hath of both my sons  
Deprived me.

*Chorus.* O thou miserable old man,  
What evils hast thou witnessed and endured !  
How wilt thou pass the remnant of thy life ?

*Peleus.* Childless, forlorn, no period to my woes  
Can I discover, but till death must drink  
The bitter potion.

*Chorus.* Sure the gods in vain  
Showered blessings on thy nuptials.

*Peleus.* Fled and withered  
Is all our ancient pomp.

*Chorus.* Alone thou mov'st  
Around thy lonely house.

*Peleus.* I have no city.  
Thee, O my sceptre, to the ground I cast,  
And from yon dreary caverns of the main,  
Daughter of Nereus, me wilt thou behold  
Utterly ruined, grovelling in the dust.

*Chorus.* Ha ! who was it that moved ? what form divine  
Do I perceive ? look there ! ye nymphs, attend,



With rapid passage through the fleecy clouds  
 Borne onward, some divinity arrives  
 At Phthia's pastures, famed for generous steeds,

THETIS, PELEUS, CHORUS.

*Thetis.* O Peleus, mindful of the ties which bound  
 Our plighted love, I hither from the house  
 Of Nereus come, and with these wholesome counsels  
 Begin ; despair not, though thy present woes  
 Are grievous : for e'en I who should have borne  
 A race of children such as ne'er might cause  
 My tears to stream, have lost the son who crowned  
 Our hopes, Achilles, swift of foot, the first  
 Of Grecian heroes. But to thee, the motives  
 Which brought me hither, will I now relate ;  
 O listen to my voice. Back to that altar  
 Devoted to the Pythian god, convey  
 This body of Achilles' slaughtered son,  
 And bury it ; so shall his tomb declare  
 The murderous violence Orestes' hand  
 Committed : but yon captive dame, I mean  
 Andromache, on Helenus bestowed  
 In marriage, in Molossia's land must dwell,  
 And her young son, the only royal branch  
 Which of the stem of Atacus remains ;  
 From him in long succession shall a race  
 Of happy kings Molossia's sceptre wield :  
 Nor will our progeny, O aged man,  
 Be utterly extinct, when blended thus  
 With Ilium, still protected by the gods,  
 Though by Minerva's stratagems it fell.  
 But, as for thee, that thou mayst know the blessing  
 Of having wedded me, who am by birth  
 A goddess and the daughter of a god,  
 From all the ills which wait on human life  
 Releasing, thee immortal will I make  
 And incorruptible ; with me a goddess  
 In Nereus' watery mansions thou a god  
 Hereafter shalt reside, and from the waves  
 Emerging with dry feet, behold our son  
 Achilles, to his parents justly dear,

Inhabiting that Isle whose chalky coasts  
Are laved by the surrounding Euxine deep.  
But go to Delphi's city by the gods  
Erected, thither bear this weltering corse,  
And when thou hast interred it, to this land  
Return, and in that cave which through the rock  
Of Sepia time hath worn, thy station keep  
Till from the waves I with my sister choir  
The fifty Nereids come, to bear thee hence.  
Thou must endure the woes imposed by fate,  
For thus hath Jove ordained. But cease to grieve  
For the deceased : for by the righteous gods  
The same impartial sentence is awarded  
To the whole human race, and death's a debt  
Which all must pay.

*Peleus.*

Hail, venerable dame,  
Daughter of Nereus, my illustrious wife :  
For what thou dost is worthy of thyself,  
And of thy progeny. I cease to grieve  
At thy command, O goddess, and will go,  
Soon as my grandson's corse I have interred,  
To Pelion's cave, where first thy beauteous form  
I in these arms received. The man whose choice  
Is by discretion guided, should select  
A consort nobly born, and give his daughters  
To those of virtuous families, nor wish  
To wed a damsel sprung from worthless sires,  
Though to his house a plenteous dower she bring :  
So shall he ne'er incur the wrath of Heaven.

*Chorus.*

A thousand shapes our varying fates assume,  
The gods perform what we could least expect,  
And oft the things for which we fondly hoped  
Come not to pass : but Heaven still finds a clue  
To guide our steps through life's perplexing maze.  
And thus does this important business end.

# IPHIGENIA IN AULIS

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

AGAMEMNON.	IPHIGENIA.
MENELAUS.	ATTENDANT.
ACHILLES.	MESSENGER.
CLYTEMNESTRA.	CHORUS, FEMALES OF CHALCIS.

### AGAMEMNON, ATTENDANT.

*Agam.* Thou old and faithful servant, from the house  
Come forth.

*Attend.* I come. What recent care disturbs  
The royal Agamemnon?

*Agam.* Thou shalt know.

*Attend.* I haste : for not to sleep inclines my age,  
Nor in these eyes is dull.

*Agam.* What star is that  
There sailing?

*Attend.* Sirius, in his middle height  
Near the seven Pleiads riding.

*Agam.* Not the sound  
Of birds is heard, nor of the sea ; the winds  
Are hushed in silence on the Euripus.

*Attend.* Why doth the royal Agamemnon then  
Rush from his tent ? Through Aulis quiet reigns,  
And motionless the watch their station hold.  
Let us go in.

*Agam.* I envy thee, old man ;  
I envy all, who pass their lives secure  
From danger, to the world, to fame unknown :  
But those to greatness raised I envy not.

*Attend.* The dignity of life in greatness lies.

*Agam.* Yet is that dignity unsafe : the chase  
Of glory is delightful, but when won  
It brings disquiet. One while from the gods,  
Their worship ill directed, ruin comes ;

One while the various and discordant views  
Of men distract the mind, and wound its peace.

*Attend.* This I approve not in a potent chief.  
Not to all good, without a taste of ill,  
Did Atreus give thee birth : it must be thine  
To joy, it likewise must be thine to grieve,  
For thou art mortal born ; and though perchance  
To thee not pleasing, thus the gods decree.  
The blazing lamp didst thou display, and write  
That letter, which thou holdest in thy hand  
E'en now ; the writing didst thou blot ; then seal,  
And open it again ; then on the floor  
Cast it in grief, the warm tear from thine eye  
Fast flowing, in thy thoughts distracted near,  
As it should seem, to madness. What new care,  
My royal lord, say what new care disturbs thee?  
Tell me, impart it to me : to a man  
Honest and faithful wilt thou speak, a man  
By Tyndarus of old sent to thy wife,  
A nuptial present, to attend the bride,  
One of tried faith, and to his office just.

*Agam.* To Leda were three beauteous daughters born,  
Phœbe, and Clytemnestra now my wife,  
And Helena : to her the youths of Greece,  
Those of the noblest rank, as wooers came.  
Each menaced high, on deeds of blood resolved,  
Should he not win the virgin ; this was cause  
To Tyndarus her father of much doubt,  
To give, or not to give her, and how best  
To make good fortune his ; at length this thought  
Occurred, that each to each the wooers give  
Their oath, and plight their hands, and on the flames  
Pour the libations, and with solemn vows  
Bind their firm faith that him who should obtain  
The virgin for his bride they all would aid ;  
If any dared to seize and bear her off,  
And drive by force her husband from her bed,  
All would unite in arms, and lay his town,  
Greek or Barbaric, level with the ground.  
Their faith thus pledged, the aged Tyndarus  
Beneath them well with cautious prudence wrought  
He gave his daughter of her wooers one

To choose, tow'ards whom the gentle gales of love  
 Should waft her : and she chose (O had he ne'er  
 Obtained that envied favour !) Menelaus.  
 To Lacedemon now the Phrygian came,  
 The judge between the beauties of the sky,  
 So fame reports him : gorgeous was his dress,  
 Glitt'ring with gold and vermeil-tinctured dyes,  
 Barbaric elegance. He loved, was loved,  
 And bore the beauteous Helena away  
 To Ida's pastoral groves ; for Menelaus  
 Was absent then. Deserted thus through Greece  
 He raved, the oaths attesting giv'n of old  
 To Tyndarus, conjuring all t' avenge  
 His wrongs. On this the Grecians rush to war,  
 And taking arms come hither to the straits  
 Of Aulis, furnished well with ships, with spears,  
 And num'rous chariots : me they chose their chief,  
 Doing a grace to Menelaus, for that  
 I am his brother. O that this high honour  
 Some other had received, not I ! The troops  
 Collected and embodied, here we sit  
 Unactive, and from Aulis wish to sail  
 In vain. The prophet Calchas, 'midst the gloom  
 That darkened on our minds, at length pronounced  
 That Iphigenia, my virgin daughter,  
 I to Diana, goddess of this land,  
 Must sacrifice : this victim giv'n, the winds  
 Shall swell our sails, and Troy beneath our arms  
 Be humbled in the dust ; but if denied,  
 These things are not to be. This when I heard,  
 I said that by the herald's voice the troops  
 Should be discharged, for never would I bear  
 To slay my daughter ; till my brother came,  
 And, urging many a plea, persuaded me  
 To bear these dreadful things. I wrote, I sealed  
 A letter to my wife, that she should send  
 Her daughter to Achilles as a bride  
 Affianced : of his worth I spoke in terms  
 Of amplest honour ; said he would not sail  
 With Greece, unless from us his nuptial bed  
 Was decked in Phthia : with my wife this found  
 Easy belief, the false tale that announced

Her daughter's destined marriage. Of the Greeks  
None but Ulysses, Calchas, and my brother  
To this are conscious. What I then resolved  
Imprudently, I prudently retract,  
Committed to this letter, which thou sawst me  
This night, old man, unfold and fold again,  
Take then this letter, haste, to Argos go.  
That there is written, in its secret folds  
Enclosed, I will explain to thee ; for thou  
Art faithful to my wife and to my house.

*Attend.* Read it, explain its purport, that my words  
May aptly with thy writing correspond.

*Agam.* "Whate'er my former letter gave in charge,  
[*Reads.*

Daughter of Leda, this I write to thee,  
That to Eubœa's winding way thou send not  
Thy daughter, nor to Aulis rising high  
Above the waves ; for to some other time  
The nuptials of the virgin we defer."

*Attend.* Will not Achilles, frustrate of his bride,  
Be fired with rage 'gainst thee, and 'gainst thy wife ?  
This might be dang'rous : is not such thy thought ?

*Agam.* His name indeed we used, but nothing more :  
Achilles knows not of the nuptials, knows  
Of our transactions nought, nor that I named  
My daughter his, as to his bed betrothed.

*Attend.* This, royal Agamemnon, is a deed  
Of perilous daring. So thy daughter, named  
A bride to him who from a goddess draws  
His birth, thou ledd'st a victim for the Grecians.

*Agam.* Distraction's in the thought : unhappy me,  
My misery sinks me ! But away ! To age  
Remitting nothing, use thy utmost speed

*Attend.* I hasten, king.

*Agam.* Now sit not on the bank  
Of shaded fountain, nor indulge to sleep.

*Attend.* Think better of me.

*Agam.* Take good heed, where'er  
The ways divide, observing that the car,  
Whose wheels swift-rolling bear my daughter hither  
Where rides the fleet of Greece, escape thee not.

*Attend.* I shall observe.

*Agam.* Now haste thee from the tent.  
If on thy way thou meet her, backward turn  
Her reins, and send her to Mycenæ's walls  
Raised by the Cyclops.

*Attend.* How, if I shall say  
This to thy wife and daughter, shall I gain  
Belief?

*Agam.* This seal, whose impress on that letter  
Thou bearest, take with thee. Go; that silver  
light

Shows the approach of morn, the harbinger  
Of the sun's fiery steeds. Be in my toils  
Assistant to me: for of mortals none  
Knows a pure course of unmixed happiness;  
None yet was born without a share of grief.

#### CHORUS.

##### *Strophe 1.*

Thus have I reached the sandy shore  
Where Aulis rises from the dashing wave,  
Nor feared its foam to brave,  
The narrow Euripus advent'ring o'er;  
My native Chalcis left, that feeds the pride  
Of the swift current hast'ning to the main,  
Illustrious Arethusa's silver tide.  
The Grecian camp, the Grecian fleet, the train  
Of demigods I wish to see,  
Who with a thousand ships, that wait to bear  
'Gainst Troy the vengeful war  
(For thus our husbands say the states decree),  
By the imperial Agamemnon led,  
In arms for bright haired Menelaus arise,  
And Helen ravished from his nuptial bed;  
Her from Eurota's sedgy bank his prize  
The shepherd Paris bore away,  
The gift of Venus on that day  
When, nigh the dewy fountain as she stood  
Contending with the rival forms of heaven,  
To her the palm of beauty given,  
In all her radiant charms the goddess glowed.

*Antistrophe 1.*

Diana's hallowed grove I seek,  
Where to the goddess frequent victims bleed,  
And through it pass with speed,  
The warm blush kindling on my youthful cheek,  
Ardent my wish to view the guard of shields,  
The armed tents of Greece extended wide,  
Their horse in warlike muster o'er the fields,  
And all the glorious scene of martial pride.  
There either Ajax struck my sight,  
One from Oileus draws his birth, and one  
From greater Telamon,  
Salamis glories in her hero's might.  
These sitting with Protesilaus I saw  
Delighted with the various-figured die.  
But Palamedes, proud his birth to draw  
From Neptune, with Tydides whirled on high  
The massy discus : Merion there  
Rejoiced the manly sport to share,  
Wondrous the hero's form and martial grace ;  
Ulysses there, whose island's craggy brow  
Frowns o'er the darkened waves below ;  
And Nireus, fairest of the Grecian race.

*Epode 1.*

Swift as the wingéd wing  
Achilles, whom the goddess Thetis bore,  
And gave to Chiron in his rigid lore  
To train his infant mind,  
I saw : in all his arms arrayed,  
The cumbrous equipage of war,  
His speed he o'er the strand displayed,  
Contending with the harnessed car :  
High o'er the beam I saw Eumelus rise,  
I heard his animating cries,  
And marked each courser beauteous to behold,  
Their glitt'ring bits embossed with gold :  
Those in the midst, the yoke that bear.  
Dappled with silvery marks their hair ;  
And each on either side  
That wind, obedient to the guiding rein,



With equal swiftness o'er the plain,  
 Bright as the flaming gold, with pride  
     On snow-white fetlocks bound  
 With rival speed I saw Pelides fly,  
     In arms, the whirling chariot nigh,  
     Light o'er the pebbled ground.

*Strophe 2.*

Hence to the numerous fleet I fly,  
     A vast and glorious sight,  
 To gratify my curious eye,  
     A woman's dear delight.  
 On the right wing from Phthia's strand  
 The Myrmidons, a valiant band,  
     In fifty gallant vessels ride;  
 And by the Nereids we behold,  
 Bright on the prows in sculptured gold  
     Achilles' arms are signified.

*Antistrophe 2.*

The Argive ships of equal oars  
     Next these their station hold;  
 The son of Talaus leads their powers,  
     And Sthenelus the bold.  
 In order next th' Athenian train  
 In sixty vessels plough the main,  
     Their host the son of Theseus leads;  
 Adorning the Munychian prows  
 In arms a sculptured Pallas glows,  
     Inspiring high heroic deeds.

[*The second Epode is lost.*]

*Strophe 3.*

Boeotia's host I there surveyed,  
     In fifty ships the warriors came:  
 An imaged form each ship displayed,  
     Proud argument of Theban fame;  
 High on each sculptured prow their Cadmus stand  
 A golden dragon holding in his hands;  
     And Leitus, who boasts his birth

From those that sprung embattled from the earth,  
Commands their naval war.  
Those, who their race from Phocis draw,  
Ranged on the foaming flood I saw.  
Oïlean Ajax there,  
Equal his numbers, leads the Locrian train,  
Leaving illustrious Thronion's plain.

*Antistrophe 3.*

From high Mycenæ's rampired towers,  
Towers by the lab'ring Cyclops wrought,  
The son of Atreus leads his powers ;  
A hundred ships the monarch brought ;  
And faithful at his side, as friend with friend,  
These eyes beheld the injured chief attend ;  
That for the fair, her house who fled,  
Lightly preferring a barbaric bed,  
Greece with a gen'rous rage  
Might rise and vindicate his cause.  
His troops from Pylos Nestor draws,  
Reverend the warrior's age ;  
On his tall vessels sculptured Alpheus stands,  
A bull, and seems to spurn the sands.

*Epode 3.*

From Ænia's stormy coast  
By Geneus led twelve vessels plough the tide ;  
The chiefs of Elis anchor by their side ;  
These through th' extended host  
Are called the brave Epéan train,  
And Eurytus their force commands.  
Dashed by their oars the foaming main  
Whitens beneath the Taphian bands ;  
Meges their leader, from that dangerous shore,  
Where rough Echinæ's vext rocks roar.  
The Salaminian Ajax to the right  
Stretches, the left wing to unite ;  
The last in station, o'er the deep  
His fleetest vessels circling sweep.  
In all their gallant pride  
I heard, I saw them stretch : to meet their war

## Euripides

Should the barbaric slight barks dare,  
Shattered and sunk beneath the tide,  
They will return no more.

I heard, I saw; and all the warlike train  
Faithful my memory shall retain,  
When reached my native shore.

ATTENDANT, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

*Attend.* This, Menelaus, is wrong; thou shouldst not do it.

*Mene.* Go to: thou wouldst be faithful to thy lords!

*Attend.* That is an honour to me, no reproach.

*Mene.* Wouldst thou do what thou shouldst not, thou shalt rue it.

*Attend.* Thou shouldst not ope the letter which I bear.

*Mene.* Thou shouldst not bear what to all Greece is hurtful.

*Attend.* With others dispute that; leave this to me.

*Mene.* I will not let it go.

*Attend.* Nor will I yield it.

*Mene.* Soon shall thy head this sceptre stain with blood.

*Attend.* Nay, it were glorious for my lords to die.

*Mene.* Let go: a slave presuming to dispute!

*Attend.* My royal master, we are wronged: by force

Thy letter hath he wrested from my hands,  
To what behoves him paying no regard.

AGAMEMNON, MENELAUS, ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

*Agam.* Why this indecent tumult at my doors?

*Attend.* My words have greater right than his t' inform thee.

*Agam.* Why, Menelaus, this strife with him, this force?

*Mene.* Look, if thou darst, at me; then will I speak.

*Agam.* Fear I, from Atreus born, to raise mine eye?

*Mene.* Dost thou see this, with basest orders charged?

*Agam.* I see it: from thy hand first give it back.

*Mene.* Not till I've shown all Greece what's written here.

*Agam.* Knowst thou, this opened, what thou shouldst not know?

*Mene.* To wring thy heart, opening thy secret baseness.

*Agam.* Where didst thou take it? Gods, hast thou no shame?

*Mene.* Watching from Argos if thy daughter comes.

*Agam.* On my affairs a spy! How shameless this!

- Mene.* Urged by my will : for I am not thy slave.  
*Agam.* Have I not leave in mine own house to rule ?  
*Mene.* How wayward is thy mind, thy present thoughts  
At variance with the past, and soon to change !  
*Agam.* Finely thy words are tuned : but know thou this,  
The wily tongue is a detested ill.  
*Mene.* The wav'ring mind is a base property,  
And darkens to our friends : I will convince thee :  
But if through pride thou turn thee from the truth,  
Small share of praise shalt thou receive from me.  
Thou knowest, when thy aim was to command  
The troops of Greece at Troy, thy semblance formed  
As if affecting nothing, but thy wish  
Most ardent ; what humility was thine :  
Pressing the hand of each, thy door to all  
Was open, to the meanest, and thy speech  
To all addressed in order, e'en to those  
Who willed no converse with thee, seeking thus  
By courteous manners thy ambitious wish  
To purchase. The supreme command obtained,  
Soon were thy manners changed, and to thy friends  
Not friendly as before ; nor was access  
Easy, oft too denied. Ill it becomes  
An honest man, when raised to power, to change  
His manners, but then most to be approved  
Firm to his friends, when through his advanced state  
He most can serve them : this I urge against thee  
As my first charge, where first I found thee base.  
But when thou camst to Aulis, with the troops  
Of Greece in arms, to nothing didst thou sink,  
Astonished at thy fortune, by the gods  
Denied a gale to swell thy sails. The Greeks  
Required thee to dismiss the ships, nor toil  
In vain at Aulis : how dejected then  
Thy visage, thy confusion then how great  
Not to command the thousand ships, and fill  
The fields of Priam with embattled hosts ?  
Me then didst thou address, "What shall I do,  
Or what expedient find, of this command,  
Of this high honour not to be deprived ?"  
When Calchas at the hallowed rites declared  
That to Diana thou must sacrifice

Thy daughter, and the Grecians then should sail,  
 With joy thy thoughts were heightened ; willingly  
 The virgin as a victim didst thou promise  
 And freely, not by force (urge not that plea),  
 Dost thou despatch a message to thy wife  
 To send thy daughter hither, the pretence  
 Her nuptials with Achilles. But thy mind  
 Was soon averse, and secretly devised  
 Letters of different import ; now in sooth  
 Thou wilt not be the murd'rer of thy daughter.  
 This air is witness, which hath heard these things  
 Of thee. To thousands this hath chanced in tasks  
 Of arduous nature ; freely they engage,  
 Then from the high attempt retreat with shame,  
 Th' ill judgment of their countrymen in part,  
 Justice in part the cause, for in the proof  
 They feel their want of power to guard the state.  
 But most I mourn th' unhappy fate of Greece,  
 Who, prompt her noble vengeance to inflict  
 On the barbarians, worthless as they are,  
 Shall let them now go scoffing off, through thee,  
 And through thy daughter. Never for his wealth  
 Would I appoint a ruler o'er the state,  
 Or chief in arms : wisdom should mark the man  
 Who in his country bears the sov'reign sway :  
 Every man sage in counsel is a leader.

*Chorus.* How dreadful, when 'twixt brothers words arise,  
 And fierce disputings kindle into strife !

*Agam.* For this I will rebuke thee ; but in brief,  
 Not raising high the eye of insolence,  
 But with more temperance, because thou art  
 My brother ; for a good man loves to act  
 With modesty. But tell me, why with rage  
 Dost thou thus swell ? why rolls thy blood-streaked  
 eye ?

Who injures thee ? of what art thou in want ?  
 A rich connubial bed, is that thy wish ?  
 This to procure thee is not in my power.  
 Thou didst possess one, but ill governed it.  
 Shall I, who with no fault have e'er been charged,  
 Suffer for thy ill conduct ? Is thy heart  
 Racked at my honours ? But a beauteous wife

In thy fond arms it is thy wish to hold,  
Transgressing decency and reason : base  
Of a bad man the pleasures. But if I,  
Before ill-judging, have with sober thought  
My purpose changed, must I be therefore deemed  
Rest of my sense? Thou rather, who hast lost  
A wife that brings thee shame, yet dost with warmth  
Wish to regain her, would the fav'ring god  
Grant thee that fortune. Of the nuptials eager  
The suitors pledged to Tyndarus their oath,  
Unwise : the hope, I ween, of the fair bride  
Effected this, more than thy grace or power :  
Take these, and march to war ; soon wilt thou find  
What oaths avail ill plighted, with slight thought,  
And by compulsion. But I will not slay  
My children : and thy wishes o'erleap justice,  
The punishment of thy flagitious wife.  
My nights, my days would pass away in tears,  
Should I with outrage and injustice wrong  
Those who from me derived their birth. These things  
Have I replied to thee in brief, with ease  
And plainness : but if thou wilt not be wise,  
What concerns me I rightly will appoint.

*Chorus.* These words are different from his former speech,  
And well the father's melting pity show.

*Mene.* Ah me unhappy ! I have then no friends.

*Agam.* Yes, if thou wish not to destroy thy friends.

*Mene.* How wilt thou show one father gave us birth?

*Agam.* I would be wise, but not be mad with thee.

*Mene.* Friends with their friends in common ought to grieve.

*Agam.* Be thy deeds friendly then, not painful to me.

*Mene.* And with all Greece shouldst thou not bear this pain?

*Agam.* All Greece, and thee, hath heaven-sent frenzy  
seized.

*Mene.* Thou gloriest in thy sceptre, and betray'st  
Thy brother. But to other means I turn,  
And other friends.

AGAMEMNON, MENELAUS, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

*Mess.* I come, imperial lord  
Of Greece, thy daughter leading, in thine house

## Euripides

Named Iphigenia by thee ; and thy wife  
 Attends her, Clytemnestra, with thy son  
 Orestes, sight delightful to thine eyes  
 After this tedious absence from thy home.  
 But wearied with this length of way, beside  
 A beauteous-flowing fountain they repose,  
 Themselves refreshing, and their steeds, unyoked  
 To taste the fresh grass of the verdant mead.  
 I run to bring thee notice, that prepared  
 Thou mayst receive them : this the troops have heard  
 For through the camp swift the report was spread  
 That Iphigenia is arrived, and all  
 Haste to the sight desirous to behold  
 Thy daughter ; for to every eye the great  
 Appear illustrious, with high splendour graced.  
 Is this her bridal day, some ask, or what  
 Intended ? Or through fond desire to see  
 His daughter did th' imperial Agamemnon  
 Send for the virgin ? Others mightst thou hear,  
 The princess to Diana, queen of Aulis,  
 Will they present ? Who shall receive her hand ?  
 But haste, begin the rites, and crown thy head.  
 And thou too, royal Menelaus, prepare  
 The hymeneals ; let the joyful house  
 Re-echo to the pipe and festive dance :  
 For happy to the virgin comes this day.

*Agam.* 'Tis well : thou hast my thanks. But go thou in ;  
 All things, if fortune favours, shall be well.—  
 Ah me, unhappy me ! What shall I say,  
 And whence begin ? In what a chain of fate  
 Am I enfolded ? Fortune, wiser far  
 Than all my vain designs, hath closely wrought  
 Beneath me. What advantages attend  
 Ignoble birth ? They are allowed to weep  
 And utter sad complaints ; but to the noble  
 This is denied. Led by the pride of rank,  
 Which rules us, to the people we are slaves.  
 I am indeed ashamed to drop the tear,  
 And not to drop the tear I am ashamed,  
 Fall'n as I am on these great miseries.  
 Well, let it be. But how shall I address  
 My wife, or how receive her ? with what eye

Look on her? For to all my former ills  
Coming unbidden, she hath added weight  
Of new distress: yet decency required  
Her presence with her daughter, to attend  
Her nuptials, and present the dearest gifts:  
There will she find me false. But thee, O thee,  
Unhappy bride (bride call I thee! how soon  
To Pluto to be wedded!), how I pity!  
Methinks I hear her suppliant voice thus speak,  
"My father, wilt thou kill me? Mayst thou make  
Thyself such nuptials, and whoe'er to thee  
Is dear." Orestes, standing near, shall cry  
In accents inarticulate, his speech,  
As yet unformed, articulate to me.  
Unhappy me! what ruin hath the son  
Of Priam brought on me! This Paris caused  
When he espoused the faithless Helena.

*Chorus.* I, as a woman and a stranger ought,  
Am moved with pity at a monarch's woes.

*Mene.* Give me thy hand, my brother, let me clasp it.

*Agam.* I give it: thou art conqueror, I a wretch.

*Mene.* By Pelops, called the father of thy father  
And mine: by Atreus, whence we draw our birth,  
I swear, that what I now shall say to thee  
Comes from my heart, nought feigned, but what I  
think.

When from thine eye I saw thee drop the tear,  
I pitied thee, and sympathizing dropped  
Myself a tear: its former reas'nings now  
My soul foregoes, no more unkind to thee,  
But, as thou feelest, feels: nay, I exhort thee  
Neither to slay thy daughter, nor to rank  
What concerns me most high: it is not just  
That grief should rend thy heart, whilst my affairs  
Go pleasantly; that any of thy house  
Should die, whilst mine behold the light. For what  
Can be my purpose? Might I not contract  
Other illustrious nuptials, if my wish  
Were other nuptials? But at such a price,  
My brother's ruin, which behoves me least,  
Should I recover Helena, an ill  
Dear with a blessing purchased? Folly ruled



Before, and youth : but on a nearer view  
 I see what 'tis to yield a child to death.  
 Besides th' unhappy virgin, near allied  
 By ties of consanguinity, excites  
 My pity, destined for a nuptial bed  
 To fall a victim : what hath she to do,  
 The virgin daughter, with my Helena ?  
 Discharged from Aulis let the troops depart.  
 And thou, my brother, cease to dew thine eyes  
 With tears, which cause the drops to start in mine.  
 Touching thy daughter hast thou oracles  
 Which respect me ; no more be that respect ;  
 My part I cede to thee. My thoughts are changed  
 From cruel, and I feel what I should feel :  
 Nature returns, and all a brother's love  
 Warm in my heart revives : of no bad man  
 The manners these, to follow still the best.

*Chorus.* Generous thy words, and worthy Tantalus  
 The son of Jove : thou dost not shame thy birth.

*Agam.* Now I applaud thee ; for beyond my thought  
 Rightly thy words conclude, and worthy thee.

*Mene.* For love and for ambition variance oft  
 Rises 'twixt brothers : but my soul abhors  
 This mutual harshness of unnatural strife.

*Agam.* But dire necessity compels me now  
 My daughter's bloody slaughter to complete.

*Mene.* Who shall compel thee to destroy thy child ?

*Agam.* The whole assembled host of Greece in arms.

*Mene.* Not if to Argos her thou send again.

*Agam.* That might be secret : this must be revealed.

*Mene.* What ? Of the people have not too great dread.

*Agam.* The oracle will Calchas sound to all.

*Mene.* Not if ere that he die : an easy thing.

*Agam.* Vainglorious is the whole prophetic breed.

*Mene.* And of no use when present, of no good.

*Agam.* But seest thou not what enters now my thought ?

*Mene.* Can I conjecture what thou dost not speak ?

*Agam.* He of the race of Sisyphus knows all.

*Mene.* Nor thee, nor me, will e'er Ulysses harm.

*Agam.* Artful, the people as he wills he leads.

*Mene.* With vanity, a mighty ill, possessed.

*Agam.* Think then thou seest him stand amidst the troops,

Declaring to them all the oracle  
 Announced by Calchas : how this sacrifice  
 I promised to Diana, then refused.  
 Soon will he lead the Grecians, and excite them,  
 Me in their fury having slain, and thee,  
 To sacrifice the virgin. Should I fly  
 To Argos, marching thither they will raze  
 Her rampires by the Cyclops raised, and spread  
 Destruction o'er the land. Unhappy me !  
 Such ills are mine, to this severe distress  
 Brought by the gods ! Yet one thing make thy care :  
 Take heed, as through the host they steps return,  
 These tidings reach not Clytemnestra's ear,  
 Till I the virgin to th' infernal king  
 Shall have presented, that I may abide  
 With as few tears as may be my hard fate.  
 Silence, ye female strangers, be your part.

## CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

How blest their golden days, who prove  
 The gentle joys of temp'rate love,  
 When modest Venus on the couch attends.  
 Pleased with tranquillity to dwell !  
 But high the madd'ning passions swell,  
 When both his bows the bright-haired tyrant bends ;  
 One, by the Graces strung, imparts  
 Pure joys that brighten in our hearts ;  
 And one, life's wild tumultuous war.  
 Far, beauteous Queen, from us may this be far ;  
 Mine be Love's pure and temp'rate grace,  
 The holy flame of chaste desire,  
 Mild Venus, in my breast inspire ;  
 There never have ungoverned passion place :

*Antistrophe.*

Nature in man we diff'ring find,  
 And diff'rent manners mark his mind :  
 When good, they give each excellence to spring,  
 And education's sage control  
 To every virtue forms the soul :

Meek modesty then Wisdom loves to bring,  
 She loves to bring each various grace,  
 Which shows where duty hath its place,  
 Whence Glory beams divinely bright,  
 And pours on life unfailing streams of light.  
 Virtues in woman fairest shine  
 That silent guard Love's holy flame ;  
 Man's various worth ascends to fame  
 Most, when t' exalt the state his great design.

*Epode.*

Thence, Paris, didst thou come,  
 Where, on Ida's pastured brow  
 Trained the snowy herds among,  
 Thine was the barbaric song,  
 Thine to bid the sweet notes flow,  
 Whilst thy Phrygian pipe breathes measures,  
 Caught from those harmonious treasures  
 Which Olympus taught his reed.  
 Unmilked herds around thee feed,  
 Whilst the contending beauties of the skies  
 From thee expect the prize.  
 Hence camest thou to the Grecian shore,  
 Thy ivory-cinctured house before :  
 Thy eyes the flames of love inspire,  
 And Helen, as she gazed, received the fire :  
 Her charms too rushed upon thy soul,  
 And madness reigned without control.  
 Hence discord, discord calls to war :  
 With many a ship, with many a spear  
 Greece rushes on, impetuous to destroy  
 The rampired walls of Troy.  
 How splended are the fortunes of the great !  
 See, Iphigenia, daughter of the king,  
 And Clytemnestra, sprung from Tyndarus,  
 My queen ! From noble ancestors they draw  
 Their birth, and are to fortune's highest state  
 Exalted : to th' inferior ranks of life  
 The powerful and the wealthy are as gods.  
 Daughters of Chalcis, near them let us stand,  
 And courteous in our hands receive the queen,

As from her car she to the ground descends,  
With duteous zeal, that she may tread secure ;  
And that th' illustrious daughter of the king  
On her arrival nothing may disturb :  
For, strangers as we are, let us not cause  
These Argive strangers trouble or affright.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, ATTENDANTS, CHORUS.

*Clytem.* This as a prosp'rous omen I accept,  
Thy courtesy and gentleness of speech :  
And hence conceive I hope that I am come  
To happy nuptials leading her a bride.  
But from the chariot take the dow'ral gifts  
Brought with me for the virgin ; to the house  
Bear them with faithful care. My daughter, quit  
The harnessed chariot, and thy delicate foot  
Place on the ground. Ye females, in your arms  
Receive her ; she is weak ; and from the car  
Conduct her down : stretch one of you your  
hand,  
Supporting me, that may I leave this seat  
In seemly manner. Some before the yoke  
Stand nigh the horses, for their eye is quick,  
Soon startled, and unruly : now receive  
This child, Orestes, Agamemnon's son,  
For he is yet an infant. Dost thou sleep,  
My son ? The rolling chariot hath subdued thee :  
Wake to thy sister's marriage happily ;  
Th' alliance of a noble youth, thyself  
Noble, shalt thou receive, the godlike son  
Of Thetis. Come, my daughter, near me stand,  
Stand near thy mother, Iphigenia, show  
These strangers how supremely I am blest  
In thee ; and here address thee to thy father.  
*Iphig.* Would it offend my mother, should I run  
And throw myself into my father's arms ?

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

*Clytem.* Imperial chief of Greece, my honoured lord,  
To thy commands obedient we are come.  
*Iphig.* My father, to thy arms I wish to run,

- Clasped to thy bosom ; dear to me thy sight  
 After such absence : be not angry with me.
- Agam.* Enjoy thy wish : of all my children thou  
 Hast of thy father always been most fond.
- Iphig.* Absent so long, with joy I look on thee.
- Agam.* And I on thee : so this is mutual joy.
- Iphig.* Well hast thou done to bring me to thy presence.
- Agam.* If well, or not well done, I cannot say.
- Iphig.* A gloom hangs on thee 'midst thy joy to see me
- Agam.* A king and chief hath many anxious cares.
- Iphig.* But let me have thee now : think not of cares.
- Agam.* Thou hast me all : each thought is bent on thee.
- Iphig.* Smooth then thy brow, and look with fondness on me
- Agam.* To see thee gives me joy, such joy as mine.
- Iphig.* Yet from thy melting eye thou pourest the tear.
- Agam.* Long, very long the absence to ensue.
- Iphig.* I know not, dearest father, what this means.
- Agam.* Thy prudent speech makes me more pity thee.
- Iphig.* Might it divert thee, idly will I talk.
- Agam.* Can I be silent ? O, thou hast my thanks.
- Iphig.* At home, my father, with thy children stay.
- Agam.* I wish it : but, that wish denied, I grieve.
- Iphig.* A mischief on the war, and Sparta's wrongs !
- Agam.* Others will feel the mischief : I have felt it.
- Iphig.* How long thy absence in the bay of Aulis !
- Agam.* Something detains me yet, detains the host.
- Iphig.* Where, father, do they say the Phrygians dwell ?
- Agam.* Where O that Priam's Paris ne'er had lived !
- Iphig.* And when thou leavst me is the voyage long ?
- Agam.* To the same place thou with thy father goest.
- Iphig.* O that with honour I might sail with thee !
- Agam.* Thou shalt, where thou thy father shalt remember.
- Iphig.* Go I alone, or sails my mother with me ?
- Agam.* Alone : nor father there, nor mother goes.
- Iphig.* Dost thou then place me in some other house ?
- Agam.* Ask not : for virgins should not know these things.
- Iphig.* Haste to me then from Troy, victorious there.
- Agam.* Here first I must present a sacrifice.
- Iphig.* Those rites thou with the priests must well prepare.
- Agam.* Thou shalt be witness, nigh the lavers placed.
- Iphig.* Shall we then round the altar raise the song ?
- Agam.* Thee happier than myself in this I deem,

That thou art ignorant. But go thou in,  
Present thee to the virgins. O, that kiss,  
That dear embrace, how painful from a child,  
Who from a father must so long be absent !  
Ah me, that breast, those cheeks, those golden  
tresses !

What piercing sorrows hath the Phrygian state  
And Helen caused us ! But I check my words ;  
For when I touch thee, in my melting eyes  
The sudden moisture rises. Go thou in.—  
Daughter of Leda, if with pity touched  
I feel my grief too strong, for that I soon  
Shall to Achilles my dear child consign,  
Forgive me : happy is it so to place  
A daughter, yet it pains a father's heart  
When he delivers to another house  
A child, the object of his tender care.

*Clytem.* Nor is my heart insensible. I feel,  
Be thou assured, an equal grief, nor want  
From thee monitions, when I lead the virgin  
With hymeneal rites ; but custom, joined  
With time, will check it. Well : his name I know  
To whom thou hast betrothed thy daughter ; more  
I wish to know, his lineage whence he draws.

*Agam.* Ægina was the daughter of Asopus.

*Clytem.* With her what mortal wedded, or what god ?

*Agam.* Jove, sire of Æacus, CEnone's chief.

*Clytem.* What son of Æacus possessed his house ?

*Agam.* Peleus ; the daughter he of Nereus weds.

*Clytem.* By force, or by the god's consent obtained ?

*Agam.* Her father gave her, first by Jove betrothed.

*Clytem.* Where did he wed her ? In the ocean waves ?

*Agam.* Where Chiron dwells, on Pelion's awful heights.

*Clytem.* The Centaur race, they say, inhabit there.

*Agam.* The gods there present graced his nuptial feast.

*Clytem.* Achilles did the sire of Thetis train ?

*Agam.* Chiron, that from bad men he might not learn.

*Clytem.* Wise he who took, wise they who gave the charge.

*Agam.* Such is the man who shall thy daughter wed.

*Clytem.* Not disapproved ; but where in Greece his seat ?

*Agam.* Where flows Apidanus through Phthia's bounds.

*Clytem.* Thine and my daughter thither will he lead ?

*Agam.* When he obtains her, this will be his care.  
*Clytem.* Blest may they be! But when the bridal day?  
*Agam.* Soon as the moon's propitious circle fills.  
*Clytem.* Is for the bride the previous victim slain?  
*Agam.* Soon shall it: this employs my present thought.  
*Clytem.* And wilt thou next the nuptial feast prepare?  
*Agam.* When I have offered what the gods require.  
*Clytem.* Where for the females shall we deck the feast?  
*Agam.* Here, where the gallant fleet at anchor rides.  
*Clytem.* Amply supply then what th' occasion claims.  
*Agam.* Knowst thou what now I wish thee do? Obey me.  
*Clytem.* In what? Thou long hast trained me to obey.  
*Agam.* We in the place where now the bridegroom is—  
*Clytem.* Without the mother! What to me belongs—  
*Agam.* Will give thy daughter 'midst th' assembled

Greeks.

*Clytem.* And where, whilst this is doing, shall I be?  
*Agam.* To Argos go, thy charge the virgins there.  
*Clytem.* And leave my daughter? Who shall raise the torch?  
*Agam.* The light, to deck the nuptials, I will hold.  
*Clytem.* Custom forbids: nor wouldst thou deem it seemly.  
*Agam.* Nor decent that thou mix with martial troops.  
*Clytem.* But decent that the mother give the daughter.  
*Agam.* Nor leave the younger in the house alone.  
*Clytem.* In close apartments they are guarded well.  
*Agam.* Let me persuade thee.  
*Clytem.*

By the potent queen,

Goddess of Argos, no. Of things abroad  
 Take thou the charge: within the house my care  
 Shall deck the virgin's nuptials as is meet.

[*She goes in.*]

*Agam.* Unhappy me! In vain I came, my hopes  
 Are vanished; out of sight it was my wish  
 To send my wife: thus I devise, thus form  
 My wily purpose, studious to beguile  
 Those dearest to my soul, in all my aims  
 Confounded. Hence to Calchas will I go  
 The Seer, inquiring what the goddess wills,  
 To me unfortunate, a grief to Greece.  
 A wise man in his house should find a wife  
 Gentle and courteous, or no wife at all.

## CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

To Simois, and his silver tide  
In eddies whirling through the plain,  
The fleet of Greece in gallant pride  
Vengeful shall bear this martial train;  
To Ilion's rampired towers shall bear,  
And Troy, by Phœbus loved, the war.  
Cassandra there, when on her soul  
The gods prophetic transports roll,  
Her brows with verdant laurel loves to bind,  
Her yellow tresses streaming to the wind.

*Antistrophe.*

The Trojans high on Ilium's towers,  
And round the walls of Troy shall stand;  
When Mars to Simois leads his powers,  
And furious ploughs the hostile strand;  
From Priam's ruined house to bear  
Again to Greece the fatal fair,  
Whose brothers, sons of Jove, on high  
Twin stars adorn the spangled sky,  
Rushing to war his brazen shield he rears,  
And glitt'ring round him blaze the Grecian spears.

*Epode.*

Phrygian Pergamus around,  
Walls of rock with turrets crowned,  
Mars the furious war shall lead:  
Blood his flaming sword shall stain,  
As from the trunk he hews the warrior's head,  
And to the dust shakes Troy's proud walls again.  
Virgins with their woes opprest,  
And Priam's queen their fall lament;  
Jove-born Helen beats her breast,  
In anguish, from her lover rent.  
From me, from mine be far the fate  
Which Lydia's gorgeous dames with sighs,  
Whilst Troy's sad matrons wipe their dewy eyes,  
In mutual converse o'er the web relate,



## Euripides

"Who will not rend her crisped hair,  
 Who will not pour the gushing tear,  
 Low sunk in dust our ruined walls?  
 Bright daughter of the bird, whose neck  
 Arched in proud state the white plumes deck,  
 For thee in dust our country falls  
 If true the fame that mighty Jove  
 Changed to a swan sought Leda's love:  
 Or fabling poets from Pieria's spring:  
 Their wanton and indecent legends bring."

## ACHILLES, CHORUS.

*Achilles.* Where is the leader of the Grecian host?  
 Who of th' attendants tells him that Achilles,  
 The son of Peleus, seeks him at the gate?—  
 Different our state, who nigh the Euripus  
 Wait here: unwedded some, their houses left  
 In solitude, here sit upon the shore;  
 And childless others leave their nuptial beds;  
 Such ardour, not without the gods, through Greece  
 Flames for this war. What touches me to speak  
 Is mine: let others what their need requires  
 Themselves explain. Thessalia's pleasant fields  
 And Peleus leaving, at the narrow surge  
 Of Euripus I wait, the Myrmidons  
 Restraining: with impatient instance oft  
 They urge me, "Why, Achilles, stay we here?  
 What tedious length of time is yet to pass  
 To Ilium ere we sail? Wouldst thou do aught?  
 Do it, or lead us home; nor here await  
 The sons of Atreus, and their cold delays."

## CLYTEMNESTRA, ACHILLES, CHORUS.

*Clytem.* Son of the goddess Thetis, in the house  
 Hearing thy words I come without the gates.  
*Achilles.* O revered Modesty, whom do mine eyes  
 Behold? Her form bears dignity and grace.  
*Clytem.* Not strange thou knowst us not, before not seen  
 But thy regard to Modesty I praise.  
*Achilles.* Who art thou? To the Grecian camp why come,  
 A woman 'midst a host of men in arms?

- Clytem.* Daughter of Leda, Clytemnestra named,  
Am I, the royal Agamemnon's wife.
- Achilles.* Well hast thou answered, and in brief: but shame  
Were mine with wedded dames to hold discourse.
- Clytem.* Stay: wherefore dost thou fly me? With my hand  
Join thy right hand, pledge of thy happy nuptials.
- Achilles.* My hand with thine! To Agamemnon this  
Were wrong, if, what I have no right, I touch.
- Clytem.* Son of the sea-born Nereid, thou hast right,  
Much right, since thou my daughter soon wilt wed.
- Achilles.* Wed, dost thou say? Amazement chains my tongue:  
What secret purpose hath thy strange discourse?
- Clytem.* 'Tis ever thus: the modest, 'midst new friends,  
At mention of their nuptials are ashamed.
- Achilles.* Ne'er did I woo thy daughter; ne'er did word  
Of nuptials from th' Atridae reach my ear.
- Clytem.* What may this mean? Thou wonderst at my  
words,  
And equal wonder thine excite in me.
- Achilles.* All is conjecture, common to us both,  
Both haply are by words alike deceived.
- Clytem.* I am abused, according nuptials here  
Never designed, it seems; I blush at this.
- Achilles.* Some one perchance 'gainst thee and me hath  
framed  
This mock. Regard it not; light let it pass.
- Clytem.* Farewell! I cannot look upon thy face,  
Basely abused, and made a liar thus.
- Achilles.* Thee too I bid farewell: within the house  
Inquiries from thy husband will I make.

ATTENDANT, CLYTEMNESTRA, ACHILLES, CHORUS.

- Attend.* Stay, stranger of the race of Æacus,  
Stay, goddess-born: daughter of Leda, stay.
- Achilles.* Who from the gates calls with his earnest voice?
- Attend.* A slave: in that I boast not: no proud vaunt  
My fortune will admit.
- Achilles.* Whose slave? Not mine.  
For I with Agamemnon have no share.
- Attend.* Hers, who stands here before the house, the gift  
Of Tyndarus her father.

*Achilles.*

Well, we stay;

What wouldst thou? why hast thou detained me?  
Speak.

*Attend.* Are you alone before this royal house?

*Achilles.* Speak as to us alone: come from the gates.

*Attend.* O fortune, and my provident caution, save  
Those whom I wish to save!

*Achilles.*

Thy words portend.

Something not brief, and seem of import high.

*Clytem.* Delay not for my hand: speak what thou wouldst.

*Attend.* Dost thou then know me, who I am, to thee  
And to thy children how benevolent?

*Clytem.* I know thee, an old servant of my house.

*Attend.* And to the royal Agamemnon given  
Part of thy dowry.

*Clytem.*

With us didst thou come

To Argos, and hast there been always mine.

*Attend.* So is it: hence to thee I bear goodwill,  
But to thy husband less.

*Clytem.*

Well then, to me,

Whate'er thy wish to speak, at length disclose.

*Attend.* Thy daughter will her father slay, her father  
With his own hand.

*Clytem.*

How! I abhor thy words,

Old man: thou art not in thy perfect sense.

*Attend.* Striking her white neck with the ruthless sword.

*Clytem.* Unhappy me! Hath madness seized his mind?

*Attend.* No: save to thee and to thy daughter, sound  
His sense: in this he errs from reason wide.

*Clytem.* What cause? What Fury fires him to the deed?

*Attend.* The Oracles, and Calchas, that the troops  
May sail.

*Clytem.* Sail whither? Wretched me! She too

How wretched, whom her father will destroy!

*Attend.* To the proud seats of Troy, thence to bring back  
Helen, the Spartan's wife.

*Clytem.*

Of her return

Is Iphigenia doomed the fatal price?

*Attend.* E'en so: thy daughter will her father slay  
A victim to Diana.

*Clytem.*

From my home

To win me were these nuptials then devised.

*Attend.* Thy daughter that with pleasure thou mightst lead  
To wed Achilles.

*Clytem.* To perdition then  
Thou comst, my daughter, and thy mother with thee.  
*Attend.* Piteous of both the suff'rings, and th' attempt  
Of Agamemnon dreadful.

*Clytem.* With my woes  
I sink, mine eye no longer holds the tear.  
*Attend.* Painful the tear that falls for children lost.  
*Clytem.* But whence, old man, knowst thou, or heardst thou  
this ?

*Attend.* I took my way, charged with a letter to thee,  
Since that which had been sent.

*Clytem.* Its purport what ?  
Forbidding, or exhorting me to bring  
My daughter to her death ?

*Attend.* This not to bring her  
Gave charge : for wise were then thy husband's  
thoughts.

*Clytem.* Charged with this letter to me, why to me  
Didst thou not give it ?

*Attend.* Menelaus by force  
Took it away, the author of these ills.

*Clytem.* Son of the sea-born Nereid, son of Peleus,  
Dost thou hear this ?

*Achilles.* What makes thee wretched, lady,  
I hear : and ill what touches me I brook.

*Clytem.* My daughter they will slay, the false pretence  
Thy nuptials.

*Achilles.* On thy husband I too charge  
Much blame, nor light doth my resentment rise.

*Clytem.* Low at thy knees I will not blush to fall,  
Of mortal birth to one of heavenly race.  
Why should I now be proud ? Or what demands,  
More than a daughter's life, my anxious care ?  
Protect, O goddess-born, a wretched mother ;  
Protect a virgin called thy bride : her head  
With garlands—ah, in vain !—yet did I crown,  
And led her as by thee to be espoused ;  
Now to be slain I bring her : but on thee,  
If thou protect her not, reproach will fall ;  
For, though not joined in marriage, thou wast called

The husband of the virgin. By this cheek,  
 By this right hand, by her that gave thee birth  
 (For me thy name hath ruined, and from thee  
 I therefore claim protection), I have now  
 No altar, but thy knee, to which to fly,  
 I have no friend but thee : the fell designs  
 Of Agamemnon's ruthless heart thou hearst ;  
 And I, a woman, as thou seest, am come  
 To this unruly camp, in mischiefs bold,  
 Of use but when they list. If thou shalt dare  
 Stretch forth thine hand to aid me, I shall find  
 Safety : if not, then am I lost indeed.

*Chorus.* To be a mother is the amplest source  
 Of nature's dear affections : this to all  
 Is common, for their children anxious thought.

*Achilles.* To noblest thoughts my tow'ring soul is raised,  
 Which at the woes of others knows to melt,  
 And bear with moderation fortune's smiles.

*Chorus.* These are the men, who, trained in reason's lore,  
 As wisdom guides them, form their life aright.

*Achilles.* There is a time, when not to build too much  
 On our own wisdom is agreeable :  
 But then there is a time, when to exert  
 Our judgment is of use. By Chiron trained,  
 Of mortals the most righteous, I have learned  
 Simplicity of manners. To the sons  
 Of Atreus, when their high commands are stamped  
 With honour, my obedience shall be paid :  
 Where honour bids not, I shall not obey :  
 But my free nature here, and when at Troy,  
 Preserved, my spear shall to my utmost power  
 Add glory to the war. But thee, oppressed  
 With miseries, and by those most dear to thee,  
 Far as a young man may, so strong I feel  
 The touch of pity, thee will I protect ;  
 And never shall thy daughter, who was called  
 Mine, by her father's hand be slain ; to weave  
 His wily trains thy husband ne'er shall make  
 Me his pretext ; for so my name would slay  
 Thy daughter, though it lifted not the sword.  
 The cause indeed thy husband ; yet not pure  
 My person, if through me, and through my nuptials

The virgin perish, suffering dreadful things  
And wrongs, at which astonished nature starts.  
I were the basest of the Greeks, a thing  
Nought worth (and Menelaus might well be ranked  
'Mongst men), no more the son of Peleus deemed,  
But of some cruel demon, should my name,  
Pleaded to screen thy husband's purpose, kill her.  
By Nereus, who beneath the wat'ry waves  
Was trained, the sire of Thetis, whence my birth,  
The royal Agamemnon shall not touch  
Thy daughter, with his finger shall not touch her,  
Nor e'en her robes : else Sipylus, a mean  
Barbaric town, from whence our chiefs derive  
Their race, shall be illustrious, and my realm,  
Phthia, be slighted as unknown to fame.  
His lustral lavers and his salted cakes  
With sorrow shall the prophet Calchas bear  
Away. The prophet ! What is he ? A man  
Who speaks 'mongst many falsehoods but few truths,  
Whene'er chance leads him to speak true ; when false,  
The prophet is no more. With nuptial rites  
Why should I say how many virgins sue  
To be united to me ? But of that  
No more. The royal Agamemnon wrongs me,  
Greatly he wrongs me : ought he not from me,  
Would he betroth his daughter, ask my name ?  
Th' assent of Clytemnestra then with ease  
Had I obtained to give her daughter to me.  
I to the Greeks had given her, if to Troy  
For this their course were checked ; the public good  
Of those with whom I join my arms t' exalt  
I should not have refused : but with the chiefs  
I now am nothing, held of no esteem  
To act, or not to act, in glory's cause.  
But soon this sword shall know whom, ere to Troy  
I come, with drops of blood I shall distain,  
Whoe'er he be that shall attempt to take  
Thy daughter from me. Rest thou then in peace ;  
I, as a guardian god, am come to thee :  
Great is the contest, yet it shall be proved.

*Chorus.* Worthy, O son of Peleus, of thyself,  
Worthy the sea-born goddess, are thy words.

*Clytem.* How shall I praise thee, that due bounds my words  
 Exceed not, nor beneath thy merit sink,  
 Thy grace impairing : for the good, when praised,  
 Feel something of disgust, if to excess  
 Commended. But I blush at words that raise  
 Pity at private woes, whilst of my ills  
 No share is thine : yet lovely is the sight,  
 When, stranger though he be, to the distressed  
 A good man gives assistance. Pity me ;  
 My suff'rings call for pity : when I thought  
 To have thee for a son, I fondly fed  
 A false and flatt'ring hope. To thee perchance,  
 And to thy future nuptials, this might be  
 An omen, should my daughter die ; 'gainst this  
 Behoves thee guard. Well did thy words begin,  
 And well they ended : be it then thy will  
 My daughter shall be saved. Wilt thou she fall  
 A suppliant at thy knees ? This ill becomes  
 A virgin ; yet, if such thy will, with all  
 Her blushes shall she come, and in her eye  
 Ingenuous modesty : or the same grace  
 Shall I, if absent she, obtain from thee ?

*Achilles.* Let her remain within : for Modesty  
 With her own modest dignity is pleased.

*Clytem.* Yet must we sue to thee with earnest prayer.

*Achilles.* Nor bring thy daughter, lady, to our sight,  
 Nor ours be rude reproach. Th' assembled host,  
 At leisure from their own domestic cares,  
 Loves the malignant jest and sland'rous tale.  
 Suppliant or not, alike shall you obtain  
 From me this grace : the contest shall be mine,  
 Great as it is, to free you from your ills.  
 Of one thing be assured, ne'er shall my tongue  
 Utter a falsehood : if I speak untruth,  
 And mock thee with vain promise, let me die :  
 But as I save thy daughter may I live.

*Clytem.* O be thou blest, thus aiding the unhappy !

*Achilles.* Now hear me, how success may best be ours.

*Clytem.* What wouldst thou ? My attention thou mayst claim

*Achilles.* The father's purpose let persuasion change.

*Clytem.* He, void of spirit, too much fears the host.

*Achilles.* Yet reason o'er the spiritless prevails.

*Clytem.* Small are my hopes : yet, say, what must I do ?

*Achilles.* First, be a suppliant to him not to slay

His children : if rejected, come to me.

If thy entreaties win him, of my aid

There is no need : thy daughter's life is saved,

I with my friend shall be on better terms,

And nought of blame the army to my charge

Can then impute, if I by reason wish

T' effect my purpose, not by violence.

Well to thy warmest wish may this succeed,

And to thy friends', accomplished without me.

*Clytem.* How wise thy words ! Whate'er to thee seems right

Shall be attempted. Should I not effect

The things I wish, where shall I see thee next,

Or whither bend my wretched steps to find

Thy hand, my firm protector 'gainst these ills ?

*Achilles.* Far as occasion shall require, myself

Will be thy guard. But with disordered step

Let no one see thee hurrying through the throng

Of Grecians, nor disgrace thy father's house :

On Tyndarus unmerited would fall

Aught of ill fame, for he is great in Greece.

*Lytem.* It shall be so. Lead thou ; on thee to wait

Me it behoves. If there are gods, on thee,

Just as thou art, their blessings must attend :

If not, to what effect is all our toil ?

# CHORUS.

## *Strophe.*

What were the strains that Hymen gave to swell,

The Lybian pipe its warbles sweet

Attamp'ring to the chorded shell,

That loves to guide the mazy-winding feet,

Whilst the whisp'ring reed around

Breathes a soft responsive sound,

When to the feast of gods on Pelion's brow

The golden-sandalled Muses took their way,

Loose to the gale their beauteous tresses flow,

Thee, Peleus, gracing, and thy bridal day,

As they pierce the tangled grove,

O'er the mountain as they rove



Where the Centaur race reside,  
 Peleus and his lovely bride  
 They hail, and those wild scenes among  
     Pour the mellifluous song.  
 The Phrygian Ganymede of form divine,  
 A royal youth of Dardan race,  
 Advanced the feast of Jove to grace,  
 Poured from the glowing bowls the sparkling wine,  
 Fifty nymphs the white sands o'er,  
 Daughters they of Nereus hoar,  
 To the nuptials light advance,  
     And weave the circling dance.

*Antistrophe.*

The Centaurs waving high their spears of pine,  
 Their heads with grassy garlands crowned,  
 Came to the bowls, the feast divine,  
 Their hoofs swift-bounding o'er the rattling ground  
     There the nymphs of Thessaly  
     Raised their tuneful voices high;  
 The prophet Phœbus joined the solemn strain,  
 And Chiron skilled to trace the Fates' decree  
 "Daughter of Nereus," sung the raptured train,  
 "A son, bright beam of beauty, shall from thee  
     Draw his birth, who will advance,  
     Dreadful with his flaming lance,  
     With his Myrmidons that wield  
     Fierce in fight the spear and shield,  
     To th' illustrious realms of Troy,  
     And her proud towers destroy;  
 His manly limbs refulgent arms enfold;  
 Vulcan, at the mother's prayer,  
 Shall the glorious gift prepare,  
 And all the hero blaze in burnished gold."  
 Thus when Peleus won his bride,  
 Of the Nereid train the pride,  
 Came the gods in bright array  
     To grace their nuptial day.

*Epode.*

But thee, unhappy maid, thy head  
 With flow'ry garlands Greece shall crown;

As from the mountain cave's cool shade  
Some beauteous heifer coming down,  
Her neck no rude yoke knows, decreed  
A victim at some shrine to bleed.  
But now a human neck must bow,  
And now the virgin's blood must flow,  
Not trained the sylvan wilds among  
To rustic pipe or pastoral song ;  
Her the fond mother decked with pride  
As to some Grecian chief a bride.  
The lovely form, the beauteous face,  
And modest virtue's blushing grace  
Avail no more : in evil hour  
Impiety hath seized the power ;  
A slighted outcast Virtue fails,  
Injustice o'er the laws prevails :  
The common danger none describes,  
Th' impending vengeance of the skies.

## CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

*Clytem.* I am come forth, if haply I may see  
My husband ; long his absence since he left  
The house. In tears is my unhappy daughter,  
And heaves the frequent sigh, since she hath heard  
The death to which her father destines her.  
I spoke of one that is approaching nigh,  
This Agamemnon, who will soon be found  
Daring against his children impious deeds.

## AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

*Agam.* Daughter of Leda, to my wish I find thee  
Before the house, that from my daughter's ear  
Apart I may speak words, which ill beseems  
A virgin, soon to be a bride, to hear.  
*Clytem.* What is it ? Let not the occasion pass.  
*Agam.* Send now thy daughter to her father's charge  
Committed ; for the lavers ready stand,  
The salted cakes, which o'er the lustral fire  
The hand must cast, the heifers too, whose blood  
Must in black streams, before the nuptials, flow  
To the chaste queen Diana, are prepared.

*Clytem.* Thy words indeed are gracious, but thy deeds I know not, should I name them, how to praise. Yet come thou forth, my daughter, for to thee Are all thy father's purposes well known : And bring thy brother, bring Orestes, wrapt Close in thy vests, my child.—See, she is here In prompt obedience to thee : what for her, What for myself is meet, that shall I speak.

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

*Agam.* Why weeps my daughter ? cheerful now no more Thy look, nor pleasant : wherefore is thine eye Fixed on the ground, thy robe before it held ?

*Iphig.* Ah me ! Whence first shall I begin to speak My ills ? For all in ills have found a first, A last, a middle, and successive train.

*Agam.* Why is it that you all are drawn together, With terror and confusion in your looks ?

*Clytem.* Answer to what I ask with honest truth.

*Agam.* Speak freely : to be questioned is my wish.

*Clytem.* Thine and my daughter art thou bent to slay ?

*Agam.* Ah, what a question ! What suspicion this !

*Clytem.* To this without evasion answer first.

*Agam.* Ask what is meet, thou what is meet shalt hear.

*Clytem.* I ask this only ; to this only speak.

*Agam.* O fate ! O fortune ! O my awful doom !

*Clytem.* And mine, and hers, one to us wretched three !

*Agam.* In what have I done wrong ?

*Clytem.* Canst thou ask this Of me ? Thy purpose is unwise and ill.

*Agam.* I am undone : my secrets are betrayed.

*Clytem.* I have heard all, know all, which thou wouldst do Against me : e'en thy silence and thy sighs Confess it ; labour not to give it words.

*Agam.* Lo, I am silent ; for to misery I should add shamelessness by speaking false.

*Clytem.* Now hear me, for my thoughts will I unfold In no obscure and coloured mode of speech. First then, for first with this will I upbraid thee, Me didst thou wed against my will, and seize By force ; my former husband Tantalus

By thee was slain. By thee my infant son,  
Torn from my breast by violence, was whirled  
And dashed against the ground. The sons of Jove,  
My brothers, glitt'ring on their steeds in arms  
Advanced against thee ; but old Tyndarus,  
My father, saved thee, at his knees become  
A suppliant ; and hence didst thou obtain  
My bed. To thee and to thy house my thoughts  
Thus reconciled, thou shalt thyself attest  
How irreproachable a wife I was,  
How chaste, with what attention I increased  
The splendour of thy house, that ent'ring there  
Thou hadst delight, and going out, with thee  
Went happiness along. A wife like this  
Is a rare prize ; the worthless are not rare.  
Three daughters have I borne thee, and this son.  
Of one of these wilt thou—O piercing grief !—  
Deprive me. Should one ask thee, for what cause  
Thy daughter wilt thou kill, what wouldst thou say ?  
Speak ; or I must speak for thee ! E'en for this,  
That Menelaus may regain Helena.  
Well would it be, if, for his wanton wife  
Our children made the price, what most we hate  
With what is dearest to us we redeem.  
But if thou lead the forces, leaving me  
At Argos, should thy absence then be long,  
Think what my heart must feel, when in the house  
I see the seats all vacant of my child,  
And her apartment vacant : I shall sit  
Alone, in tears, thus ever wailing her :  
"Thy father, O my child, hath slain thee ; he  
That gave thee birth, hath killed thee, not another,  
Nor by another hand ; this is the prize  
He left his house." But do not, by the gods,  
Do not compel me to be aught but good  
To thee, nor be thou aught but good to me ;  
Since there will want a slight pretence alone  
For me, and for my daughters left at home,  
To welcome, as becomes us, thy return.  
Well, thou wilt sacrifice thy child : what vows  
Wilt thou then form ? what blessing wilt thou ask  
To wait thee, thou, who dost thy daughter slay—

Thou, who with shame to this unlucky war  
 Art marching? Is it just that I should pray  
 For aught of good to thee? Should I not deem  
 The gods unwise, if they their favours shower  
 On those who stain their willing hands with blood?  
 Wilt thou, to Argos when returned, embrace  
 Thy children? But thou hast no right: thy face  
 Which of thy children will behold, if one  
 With cool deliberate purpose thou shalt kill?  
 Now to this point I come: if thee alone  
 To bear the sceptre, thee to lead the troops  
 Th' occasion called, shouldst thou not thus have urged?  
 Thy just appeal to Greece: "Is it your will,  
 Ye Grecians, to the Phrygian shores to sail?  
 Cast then the lot whose daughter must be slain."  
 This had at least been equal; nor hadst thou  
 Been singled out from all to give thy child  
 A victim for the Greeks. Or Menelaus,  
 Whose cause this is, should for the mother slay  
 Hermione: but I, who to thy bed  
 Am faithful, of my child shall be deprived,  
 And she, that hath misdane, at her return  
 To Sparta her young daughter shall bear back,  
 And thus be happy. Aught if I have said  
 Amiss, reply to that: but if my words  
 Speak nought but sober reason, do not slay  
 Thy child, and mine: and thus thou wilt be wise.

*Chorus.* Be thou persuaded: reason bids preserve  
 Our children: this no mortal can gainsay.

*Iphig.* Had I, my father, the persuasive voice  
 Of Orpheus, and his skill to charm the rocks  
 To follow me, and soothe whome'er I please  
 With winning words, I would make trial of it;  
 But I have nothing to present thee now  
 Save tears, my only eloquence; and those  
 I can present thee. On thy knees I hang,  
 A suppliant wreath, this body, which she bore  
 To thee. Ah! kill me not in youth's fresh prime  
 Sweet is the light of heaven; compel me not  
 What is beneath to view. I was the first  
 To call thee father, me thou first didst call  
 Thy child; I was the first that on thy knees

Fondly caressed thee, and from thee received  
The fond caress ; this was thy speech to me :  
" Shall I, my child, e'er see thee in some house  
Of splendour, happy in thy husband, live,  
And flourish, as becomes my dignity ? "  
My speech to thee was, leaning 'gainst thy cheek,  
Which with my hand I now caress : " And what  
Shall I then do for thee ? Shall I receive  
My father when grown old, and in my house  
Cheer him with each fond office, to repay  
The careful nurture which he gave my youth ? "  
These words are on my memory deep impressed ;  
Thou hast forgot them, and wilt kill thy child.  
By Pelops I entreat thee, by thy sire  
Atreus, by this my mother, who before  
Suffered for me the pangs of childbirth, now  
These pangs again to suffer, do not kill me.  
If Paris be enamoured of his bride,  
His Helen, what concerns it me ? and how  
Comes he to my destruction ? Look upon me,  
Give me a smile, give me a kiss, my father,  
That, if my words persuade thee not, in death  
I may have this memorial of thy love.  
My brother, small assistance canst thou give  
Thy friends, yet for thy sister with thy tears  
Implore thy father that she may not die :  
E'en infants have a sense of ills : and see,  
My father, silent though he be, he sues  
To thee : be gentle to me, on my life  
Have pity. Thy two children by this beard  
Entreat thee, thy dear children : one is yet  
An infant, one to riper years arrived.  
I will sum all in this, which shall contain  
More than long speech : To view the light of life  
To mortals is most sweet, but all beneath  
Is nothing : of his senses is he reft  
Who hath a wish to die ; for life, though ill,  
Excels whate'er there is of good in death.

*Chorus.* For thee, unhappy Helen, and thy love,  
A contest dreadful, and surcharged with woes,  
To the Atridæ and their children comes.

*Agam.* What calls for pity, and what not, I know :

I love my children, else I should be void  
 Of reason: to dare this is dreadful to me,  
 And not to dare is dreadful. I perforce  
 Must do it. What a naval camp is here  
 You see, how many kings of Greece arrayed  
 In glitt'ring arms: to Ilium's towers are these  
 Denied t' advance, unless I offer thee  
 A victim, thus the prophet Calchas speaks,  
 Denied from her foundations to o'erturn  
 Illustrious Troy; and through the Grecian host  
 Maddens the fierce desire to sail with speed  
 'Gainst the Barbarians' land, and check their rage  
 For Grecian dames. My daughters these will slay  
 At Argos, you too will they slay, and me,  
 Should I, the goddess not revering, make  
 Of none effect her oracle. To this  
 Not Menelaus, my child, hath wrought my soul,  
 Nor to his will am I a slave; but Greece,  
 For which will I, or will I not, perforce  
 Thee I must sacrifice: my weakness here  
 I feel, and must submit. In thee, my child,  
 What lies, and what in me, Greece should be free,  
 Nor should her sons beneath Barbarians bend,  
 Their nuptial beds to ruffian force a prey.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

*Clytem.* Alas, my child! O strangers! Wretched me,  
 How wretched in thy death! Thy father flies thee;  
 He flies, but dooms thee to the realms beneath.

*Iphig.* My mother, O my mother! Wretched me!  
 For both our fortunes, full of woe,  
 One strain, one mournful strain shall flow.  
 No more the gladsome light of day,  
 No more the bright sun's golden ray  
 Shall shine, ah me! to cheer my child.  
 Ah me! Ye Phrygian forests wild,  
 Ye snow-clad mountains, rude that rise,  
 Mountains of Ida to the skies;  
 Where Priam once his son unblest,  
 Far severed from his mother's breast,  
 Exposed, this Paris to destroy;  
 Idæus thence they called the boy;

The boy they called Idæus, known  
So named through all the Phrygian town.  
O that his son he ne'er had laid  
Where with their herds the herdsmen strayed,  
The fountains of the nymphs among,  
Where roll the lucid streams along,  
And the green mead profusely pours  
The blushing glow of roseate flowers,  
With hyacinths of dusky hue,  
For goddesses which lovely grew.  
Once Pallas came to those sweet glades,  
And Juno deigned to grace their shades,  
And Venus fraught with wanton wiles,  
Resistless with enchanting smiles,  
And Hermes, messenger of Jove.  
Venus in all the sweets of love  
Rejoicing, Pallas in her spear,  
And proud the bed of Jove to share,  
Juno's bright form, imperial dame,  
Once to the odious judgment came :  
For beauty and for beauty's prize  
This contest drew them from the skies,  
But death on me : yet Greece shall own  
My death assures her high renown.

*orus.* Diana hath accepted thee the first  
Of victims, that our arms may sail to Troy.  
*izg.* But he, to whom my birth I owe,  
Betrays and flies me 'midst my woe.  
My mother ! Ah my cruel fate !  
He flies, and leaves me desolate.  
Ill-omened Helena, thy love  
Fatal, will fatal to me prove :  
I die, I perish, I am slain,  
My blood th' unhallowed sword shall stain  
Unhallowed is my father's hand,  
That pours it on th' empurpled sand.  
O, had the ships ne'er ploughed their way  
To Aulis, to this winding bay !  
O, had Jove given the fleet to bear  
To Troy's proud shores the wafted war ;  
Not adverse winds, that sullen sweep  
Across Eubœa's angry deep !



To some he grants the fav'ring gales  
That wanton in their flying sails ;  
Necessity to some and pain ;  
To some to cut the azure main ;  
These quit the port with gallant pride,  
Reluctant those at anchor ride.  
To sufferings born the human race,  
In sufferings pass life's little space :  
Why since misfortunes 'round them wait,  
Should men invite their cruel fate ?

*Chorus.* Alas, what woes, what miseries hath thou brought,  
Daughter of Tyndarus, on Greece ! But thee,  
Unhappy virgin, by this flood of ills  
O'erwhelmed I wail. Ah, were this fate not thine !

*Iphig.* My mother, what a crowd of men I see  
Advance !

*Clytem.* The son of Thetis with them comes,  
For whom, my child, I led thee to this strand.

*Iphig.* Open the doors to me, ye female train,  
That I may hide myself.

*Clytem.* Whom dost thou fly ?

*Iphig.* Achilles, whom I blush to see.

*Clytem.* And why ?

*Iphig.* These ill-starred nuptials cover me with shame.

*Clytem.* Nothing of pleasure doth thy state present.

Yet stay : this is no time for grave reserve.

ACHILLES, CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

*Achilles.* Daughter of Leda, O unhappy queen !

*Clytem.* Thy voice speaks nothing false.

*Achilles.* Among the Greeks

Dreadful the clamour.

*Clytem.* What the clamour ? Say.

*Achilles.* Touching thy daughter.

*Clytem.* Thou hast said what bears

No happy omen

*Achilles.* That she must be slain

A victim.

*Clytem.* And doth none against this speak ?

*Achilles.* I was with outrage threatened.

*Clytem.* Stranger, how ?

*Achilles.* To be o'erwhelmed with stones.

*Clytem.*

Whilst thou wouldst save

My child?

*Achilles.*

E'en so.

*Clytem.*

Who dared to touch thee?

*Achilles.*

All

The Grecians.

*Clytem.*

Were thy troops of Myrmidons

Not present to thee?

*Achilles.*

They were first in rage.

*Clytem.*

Then are we lost, my child.

*Achilles.*

They cried aloud

That I was vanquished by a woman.

*Clytem.*

Aught

Didst thou reply?

*Achilles.*

That her, who was to be

My bride, they should not slay.

*Clytem.*

With justice urged.

*Achilles.*

Named by her father mine.

*Clytem.*

From Argos brought

By his command.

*Achilles.*

In vain : I was o'erpowered

By their rude cries.

*Clytem.*

The many are indeed

A dreadful ill.

*Achilles.*

Yet I will give thee aid.

*Clytem.*

Wilt thou alone fight with a host?

*Achilles.*

Thou seest

These bearing arms.

*Clytem.*

May thy designs succeed !

*Achilles.*

They shall succeed.

*Clytem.*

Shall not my child be slain?

*Achilles.*

Never by my permission.

*Clytem.*

Will none come

To lay rude hands upon the virgin?

*Achilles.*

Many :

Ulysses with them ; he will lead her.

*Clytem.*

What,

He of the race of Sisypheus?

*Achilles.*

The same.

*Clytem.*

Comes he of his free will, or by the host

Appointed?

*Achilles.* Chosen, by his own consent.

*Clytem.* Bad choice, to be with blood polluted.

*Achilles.* Will I keep from her. Him

*Clytem.* Would he drag her hence  
Against her will?

*Achilles.* Even by her golden locks.

*Clytem.* What now behoves me do?

*Achilles.* Be firm, and hold  
Thy daughter back.

*Clytem.* And shall she not be slain  
For that?

*Achilles.* But he will surely come for this.

*Iphig.* My mother, hear ye now my words : for thee  
Offended with thy husband I behold.  
Vain anger ! for where force will take its way,  
To struggle is not easy. Our warm thanks  
Are to this stranger for his prompt goodwill  
Most justly due ; yet, it behoves thee, see  
Thou art not by the army charged with blame ;  
Nothing the more should we avail, on him  
Mischief would fall. Hear then what to my mind  
Deliberate thought presents. It is decreed  
For me to die : this then I wish, to die  
With glory, all reluctance banished far.  
My mother, weigh this well, that what I speak  
Is honour's dictate. All the powers of Greece  
Have now their eyes on me ; on me depends  
The sailing of the fleet, the fall of Troy,  
And not to suffer, should a new attempt  
Be dared, the rude Barbarians from blest Greece  
To bear in future times her dames by force,  
This ruin bursting on them for the loss  
Of Helena, whom Paris bore away.  
By dying all these things shall I achieve,  
And blest, for that I have delivered Greece,  
Shall be my fame. To be too fond of life  
Becomes not me ; nor for thyself alone,  
But to all Greece a blessing, didst thou bear me.  
Shall thousands, when their country's injured, lift  
Their shields, shall thousands grasp the oar, and dare,  
Advancing bravely 'gainst the foe, to die

For Greece? And shall my life, my single life,  
Obstruct all this? Would this be just? What word  
Can we reply? Nay more; it is not right  
That he with all the Grecians should contend  
In fight, should die, and for a woman. No;  
More than a thousand women is one man  
Worthy to see the light of life. If me  
The chaste Diana wills t' accept, shall I,  
A mortal, dare oppose her heavenly will?  
Vain the attempt: for Greece I give my life.  
Slay me, demolish Troy: for these shall be  
Long time my monuments, my children these,  
My nuptials, and my glory. It is meet  
That Greece should o'er Barbarians bear the sway,  
Not that Barbarians lord it over Greece:  
Nature hath formed them slaves, the Grecians free.

*Chorus.* Thine, royal virgin, is a generous part:  
But harsh what Fortune and the Goddess wills.

*Achilles.* Daughter of Agamemnon, highly blest  
Some god would make me, if I might attain  
Thy nuptials. Greece in thee I happy deem,  
And thee in Greece. This hast thou nobly spoken,  
And worthy of thy country: to contend  
Against a goddess of superior power  
Desisting, thou hast judged the public good  
A better, nay, a necessary part.  
For this more ardent my desire to gain thee  
My bride, this disposition when I see,  
For it is generous. But consider well:  
To do thee good, to lead thee to my house,  
Is my warm wish; and much I should be grieved,  
Be witness Thetis, if I save thee not  
In arms against the Grecians. In thy thought  
Revolve this well: death is a dreadful thing.

*Iphig.* Reflecting not on any this I speak,  
Enough of wars and slaughters from the charms  
Of Helen rise: but die not thou for me,  
O stranger, nor distain thy sword with blood;  
But let me save my country, if I may.

*Achilles.* O glorious spirit! Nought have I 'gainst this  
To urge, since such thy will; for what thou sayst  
Is generous: why should not the truth be spoken?

But of thy purpose thou mayst yet repent.  
 Know then my resolution : I will go,  
 And nigh the altar place these arms, thy death  
 Preventing, not permitting : thou perchance  
 Mayst soon approve my purpose, nigh thy throat  
 When thou shalt see the sword : and for that cause  
 I will not, for a rash unweighed resolve,  
 Abandon thee to die ; but with these arms  
 Wait near Diana's temple till thou come.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

*Iphig.* Why, mother, dost thou shed these silent tears?  
*Clytem.* I have a cruel cause, that rends my heart.  
*Iphig.* Forbear, nor sink my spirit. Grant me this.  
*Clytem.* Say what : by me my child shall ne'er be wronged.  
*Iphig.* Clip not those crisped tresses from thine head,  
 Nor robe thee in the sable garb of woe.  
*Clytem.* What hast thou said, my child? When thou art  
 lost-----  
*Iphig.* Not lost, but saved : through me thou shalt be famed.  
*Clytem.* What, for thy death shall I not mourn, my child?  
*Iphig.* No, since for me a tomb shall not be raised.  
*Clytem.* To die then, is not that to be entombed?  
*Iphig.* The altar of the goddess is my tomb.  
*Clytem.* Well dost thou speak, my child : I will comply.  
*Iphig.* And deem me blest, as working good to Greece.  
*Clytem.* What message to thy sisters shall I bear?  
*Iphig.* Them too array not in the garbs of woe.  
*Clytem.* What greetings to the virgins dost thou send?  
*Iphig.* My last farewell. To manhood train Orestes.  
*Clytem.* Embrace him, for thou ne'er shalt see him more.  
*Iphig.* Far as thou couldst, thou didst assist thy friends.  
 [ *To Orestes.*  
*Clytem.* At Argos can I do aught pleasing to thee?  
*Iphig.* My father, and thy husband, do not hate.  
*Clytem.* For thy dear sake fierce contests must he bear.  
*Iphig.* For Greece, reluctant, me to death he yields.  
*Clytem.* Basely, with guile, unworthy Atreus' son.  
*Iphig.* Who goes with me, and leads me, by the hair  
 Ere I am dragged?  
*Clytem.* I will go with thee.

*Iphig.*

That were unseemly.

No:

*Clytem.*

Hanging on thy robes.

*Iphig.*

Let me prevail, my mother; stay. To me  
As more becoming this, and more to thee.  
Let one of these, th' attendants of my father,  
Conduct me to Diana's hallowed mead,  
Where I shall fall a victim.

*Clytem.*

O my child,

Dost thou then go?

*Iphig.*

And never to return.

*Clytem.*

And wilt thou leave thy mother?

*Iphig.*

As thou seest,

Not as I merit.

*Clytem.*

Stay, forsake me not.

*Iphig.*

I suffer not a tear to fall. But you,  
Ye virgins, to my fate attune the hymn,  
"Diana, daughter of almighty Jove."  
With fav'ring omens sing "Success to Greece."  
Come, with the basket one begin the rites,  
One with the purifying cakes the flames  
Enkindle; let my father his right hand  
Place on the altar; for I come to give  
Safety to Greece, and conquest to her arms.  
Lead me: mine the glorious fate  
To o'erturn the Phrygian state;  
Ilium's towers their head shall bow.  
With the garlands bind my brow,  
Bring them, be these tresses crowned.  
Round the shrine, the altar round  
Bear the lavers, which you fill  
From the pure translucent rill.  
High your choral voices raise,  
Tuned to hymn Diana's praise,  
Blest Diana, royal maid.  
Since the fates demand my aid,  
I fulfil their awful power  
By my slaughter, by my gore.

*Chorus.*

Reverenced, revered mother, now  
Thus for thee our tears shall flow:  
For unhallowed would a tear  
'Midst the solemn rites appear.

*Iphig.* Swell the notes, ye virgin train,  
To Diana swell the strain,  
Queen of Chalcis, adverse land,  
Queen of Aulis, on whose strand,  
Winding to a narrow bay,  
Fierce to take its angry way  
Waits the war, and calls on me  
Its retarded force to free.  
O my country, where these eyes  
Opened on Pelasgic skies!  
O ye virgins, once my pride,  
In Mycenæ who reside!

*Chorus.* Why of Perseus name the town,  
Which Cyclopean rampires crown?

*Iphig.* Me you reared a beam of light  
Freely now I sink in night.

*Chorus.* And for this immortal fame,  
Virgin, shall attend thy name.

*Iphig.* Ah, thou beaming lamp of day,  
Jove-born, bright, ethereal ray,  
Other regions me await,  
Other life, and other fate!  
Farewell, beauteous lamp of day,  
Farewell, bright ethereal ray!

*Chorus.* See, she goes: her glorious fate  
To o'erturn the Phrygian state;  
Soon the wreaths shall bind her brow;  
Soon the lustral waters flow;  
Soon that beauteous neck shall feel  
Piercing deep the fatal steel,  
And the ruthless altar o'er  
Sprinkle drops of gushing gore.  
By thy father's dread command  
There the cleansing lavers stand;  
There in arms the Grecian powers  
Burn to march 'gainst Ilium's towers.  
But our voices let us raise,  
Tuned to hymn Diana's praise,  
Virgin daughter she of Jove,  
Queen among the gods above.  
That with conquest and renown  
She the arms of Greece may crown.

To thee, dread power, we make our vows,  
Pleased when the blood of human victims flows.  
To Phrygia's hostile strand,  
Where rise perfidious Ilium's hated towers,  
Waft, O waft the Grecian powers,  
And aid this martial band!  
On Agamemnon's honoured head,  
Whilst wide the spears of Greece their terrors spread,  
Th' immortal crown let conquest place,  
With glory's brightest grace.

MESSENGER, CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

*Mess.* O royal Clytemnestra, from the house  
Hither advance, that thou mayst hear my words.

*Clytem.* Hearing thy voice I come, but with affright  
And terror trembling, lest thy coming bring  
Tidings of other woes, beyond what now  
Afflict me.

*Mess.* Of thy daughter have I things  
Astonishing and awful to relate.

*Clytem.* Delay not then, but speak them instantly.

*Mess.* Yes, honoured lady, thou shalt hear them all  
Distinct from first to last, if that my sense  
Disordered be not faithless to my tongue.  
When to Diana's grove and flow'ry meads  
We came, where stood th' assembled host of Greece.  
Leading thy daughter, straight in close array  
Was formed the band of Argives; but the chief  
Imperial Agamemnon, when he saw  
His daughter as a victim to the grove  
Advancing, groaned, and bursting into tears  
Turned from the sight his head, before his eyes  
Holding his robe. The virgin near him stood,  
And thus addressed him: "Father, I to thee  
Am present: for my country, and for all  
The land of Greece, I freely give myself  
A victim: to the altar let them lead me,  
Since such the oracle. If aught on me  
Depends, be happy, and attain the prize  
Of glorious conquest, and revisit safe  
Your country: of the Grecians for this cause



Let no one touch me ; with intrepid spirit  
Silent will I present my neck." She spoke,  
And all that heard admired the noble soul  
And virtue of the virgin. In the midst  
Talthybius standing, such his charge, proclaimed  
Silence to all the host : and Calchas now,  
The prophet, in the golden basket placed  
Drawn from its sheath the sharp-edged sword, and  
bound

The sacred garlands round the virgin's head.  
The son of Peleus, holding in his hands  
The basket and the laver, circled round  
The altar of the goddess, and thus spoke :  
" Daughter of Jove, Diana, in the chase  
Of savage beasts delighting, through the night  
Who rollest thy resplendent orb, accept  
This victim, which th' associate troops of Greece,  
And Agamemnon, our imperial chief,  
Present to thee, the unpolluted blood  
Now from this beauteous virgin's neck to flow.  
Grant that secure our fleets may plough the main,  
And that our arms may lay the rampired walls  
Of Troy in dust." The sons of Atreus stood,  
And all the host fixed on the ground their eyes.  
The priest then took the sword, preferred his prayer,  
And with his eye marked where to give the blow.  
My heart with grief sunk in me, on the earth  
Mine eyes were cast ; when sudden to the view  
A wonder ! For the stroke each clearly heard,  
But where the virgin was none knew. Aloud  
The priest exclaims, and all the host with shouts  
Rifted the air, beholding from some god  
A prodigy, which struck their wond'ring eyes,  
Surpassing faith when seen : for on the ground  
Panting was laid a hind of largest bulk,  
In form excelling ; with its spouting blood  
Much was the altar of the goddess dewed.  
Calchas at this, think with what joy, exclaimed :  
" Ye leaders of th' united host of Greece,  
See you this victim, by the goddess brought,  
And at her altar laid, a mountain hind ?  
This, rather than the virgin, she accepts,

Not with the rich stream of her noble blood  
To stain the altar ; this she hath received  
Of her free grace, and gives a fav'ring gale  
To swell our sails, and bear th' invading war  
To Ilium : therefore rouse, ye naval train,  
Your courage. To your ships ! for we this day,  
Leaving the deep recesses of this shore,  
Must pass th' Ægean sea." Soon as the flames  
The victim had consumed, he poured a prayer,  
That o'er the waves the host might plough their way.  
Me Agamemnon sends, that I should bear  
To thee these tidings, and declare what fate  
The gods assign him, and through Greece t' obtain  
Immortal glory. What I now relate  
I saw, for I was present ; to the gods  
Thy daughter, be thou well assured, is fled.  
Therefore lament no more, no more retain  
Thy anger 'gainst thy lord : to mortal men  
Things unexpected oft the gods dispense,  
And whom they love they save : this day hath seen  
Thy daughter dead, seen her alive again.

*Chorus.* His tidings with what transport do I hear !  
Thy daughter lives, and lives among the gods.

*Clytem.* And have the gods, my daughter, borne thee hence ?  
How then shall I address thee ? Or of this  
How deem ! Vain words, perchance, to comfort me  
And soothe to peace the anguish of my soul.

*Mess.* But Agamemnon comes, and will confirm  
Each circumstance which thou hast heard from me.

*Agam.* Lady, we have much cause to think ourselves,  
Touching our daughter, blest : for 'mongst the gods  
Commercing she in truth resides. But thee  
Behoves it with thine infant son return  
To Argos, for the troops with ardour haste  
To sail. And now farewell ! My greetings to thee  
From Troy will be unfrequent, and at times  
Of distant interval : mayst thou be blest !

*Chorus.* With joy, Atides, reach the Phrygian shore ;  
With joy return to Greece, and bring with thee  
Bright conquest, and the glorious spoils of Troy !

# IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

IPHIGENIA.  
ORESTES.  
PYLADES.

THOAS.  
HERDSMAN.  
MESSENGER.

CHORUS OF GRECIAN WOMEN, CAPTIVES, ATTENDANTS  
ON IPHIGENIA IN THE TEMPLE.

### IPHIGENIA.

To Pisa by the fleetest couriers borne  
Comes Pelops, son of Tantalus, and weds  
The virgin daughter of Cnemidius :  
From her sprung Atreus ; Menelaus from him,  
And Agamemnon ; I from him derive  
My birth, his Iphigenia, by his queen  
Daughter of Tyndarus. Where frequent winds  
Swell the vext Euripus with eddying blasts,  
And roll the dark'ning waves, my father slew me  
A victim to Diana, so he thought,  
For Helen's sake, its bay where Aulis winds  
To fame well known, for there his thousand ships,  
Th' armament of Greece, th' imperial chief  
Convened, desirous that his Greeks should snatch  
The glorious crown of victory from Troy,  
And punish the base insult to the bed  
Of Helen, vengeance grateful to the soul  
Of Menelaus. But 'gainst his ships the sea  
Long barred, and not one fav'ring breeze to swell  
His flagging sails, the hallowed flames the chief  
Consults, and Calchas thus disclosed the fates :  
" Imperial leader of the Grecian host,  
Hence shalt thou not unmoor thy vessels ere  
Diana as a victim shall receive  
Thy daughter Iphigenia. What the year

Most beauteous should produce, thou to the queen  
Dispensing light didst vow to sacrifice :  
A daughter Clytemnestra in thy house  
Then bore (the peerless grace of beauty thus  
To me assigning) : her must thou devote  
The victim." Then Ulysses by his arts  
Me, to Achilles as designed a bride,  
Won from my mother. My unhappy fate  
To Aulis brought me ; on the altar there  
High was I placed, and o'er me gleamed the sword  
Aiming the fatal wound : but from the stroke  
Diana snatched me, in exchange a hind  
Giving the Grecians ; through the lucid air  
Me she conveyed to Tauris, here to dwell,  
Where o'er barbarians a barbaric king  
Holds his rude sway, named Thoas, whose swift foot  
Equals the rapid wing : me he appoints  
The priestess of this temple, where such rites  
Are pleasing to Diana, that the name  
Alone claims honour ; for I sacrifice  
(Such, ere I came, the custom of the state)  
Whatever Grecian to this savage shore  
Is driven. The previous rites are mine ; the deed  
Of blood, too horrid to be told, devolves  
On others in the temple ; but the rest,  
In reverence to the goddess, I forbear.  
But the strange visions, which the night now past  
Brought with it, to the air, if that may soothe  
My troubled thought, I will relate. I seemed,  
As I lay sleeping, from this land removed  
To dwell at Argos, resting on my couch  
'Midst the apartments of the virgin train.  
Sudden the firm earth shook ; I fled, and stood  
Without ; the battlements I saw, and all  
The rocking roof fall from its lofty height  
In ruins to the ground ; of all the house,  
My father's house, one pillar, as I thought,  
Alone was left, which from its cornice waved  
A length of auburn-locks, and human voice  
Assumed. The bloody office, which is mine  
To strangers here, respecting, I to death,  
Sprinkling the lustral drops, devoted it

With many tears. My dream I thus expound,  
 Orestes, whom I hallowed by my rites,  
 Is dead : for sons are pillars of the house,  
 They, whom my lustral lavers sprinkle, die.  
 I cannot to my friends apply my dream,  
 For Strophius, when I perished, had no son.  
 Now to my brother, absent though he be,  
 Libations will I offer ; this at least,  
 With the attendants given me by the king,  
 Virgins of Greece, I can : but what the cause  
 They yet attend me not within the house,  
 The temple of the goddess where I dwell ?

ORESTES, PYLADES.

*Orestes.* Keep careful watch, lest some one come this way.

*Pylades.* I watch, and turn mine eye to every part.

*Orestes.* And dost thou, Pylades, imagine this

The temple of the goddess which we seek,  
 Our sails from Argos sweeping o'er the main ?

*Pylades.* Orestes, such my thought, and must be thine.

*Orestes.* And this the altar wet with Grecian blood ?

*Pylades.* Crimsoned with gore behold its sculptured wreaths

*Orestes.* See, from the battlements what trophies hang !

*Pylades.* The spoils of strangers that have here been slain.

*Orestes.* Behoves us then to watch with careful eye.

O Phœbus, by thy oracles again

Why hast thou led me to these toils ? E'er since

In vengeance for my father's blood I slew

My mother, ceaseless by the Furies driven,

Vagrant, an outcast, many a bending course

My feet have trod : to thee I came, of thee

Inquired this whirling frenzy by what means,

And by what means my labours I might end.

Thy voice commanded me to speed my course

To this wild coast of Tauris, where a shrine

Thy sister hath, Diana : thence to take

The statue of the goddess, which from heaven,

So say the natives, to this temple fell :

This image or by fraud or fortune won,

The dangerous toil achieved, to place the prize

In the Athenian land : no more was said ;

But that performing this I should obtain  
Rest from my toils. Obedient to thy words  
On this unknown, unhospitable coast  
Am I arrived. Now, Pylades, for thou  
Art my associate in this dangerous task,  
Of thee I ask, What shall we do? for high  
The walls, thou seest, which fence the temple round :  
Shall we ascend their height? But how escape  
Observing eyes? Or burst the brazen bars?  
Of these we nothing know. In the attempt  
To force the gates, or meditating means  
To enter, if detected, we shall die.  
Shall we then, ere we die, by flight regain  
The ship, in which we hither ploughed the sea?

*Pylades.* Of flight we brook no thought, nor such hath been  
Our wont; nor may the god's commanding voice  
Be disobeyed: but from the temple now  
Retiring, in some cave, which the black sea  
Beats with its billows, we may lie concealed  
At distance from our bark, lest some, whose eyes  
May note it, bear the tidings to the king,  
And we be seized by force. But when the eye  
Of night comes darkling on, then must we dare,  
And take the polished image from the shrine,  
Attempting all things: and the vacant space  
Between the triglyphs, mark it well, enough  
Is open to admit us; by that way  
Attempt we to descend. In toils the brave  
Are daring; of no worth the abject soul.

*Orestes.* This length of sea we ploughed not from this coast,  
Nothing effected, to return: but well  
Hast thou advised; the god must be obeyed.  
Retire we then where we may lie concealed:  
For never from the god will come the cause  
That what his sacred voice commands should fall  
Effectless. We must dare. No toil to youth  
Excuse, which justifies inaction, brings.

IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

*Iphig.* You, who your savage dwellings hold  
Nigh this inhospitable main,

'Gainst clashing rocks with fury rolled,  
 From all but hallowed words abstain.  
 Virgin queen, Latona's grace,  
 Joying in the mountain chase,  
 To thy court, thy rich domain,  
 To thy beauteous-pillared fane,  
 Where our wond'ring eyes behold  
 Battlements that blaze with gold,  
 Thus my virgin steps I bend,  
 Holy, the holy to attend,  
 Servant, virgin queen, to thee,  
 Power, who bearest life's golden key,  
 Far from Greece for steeds renowned,  
 From her walls with towers crowned,  
 From the beauteous-planted meads  
 Where his train Eurotas leads,  
 Visiting the loved retreats  
 Once my royal father's seats.

*Chorus.* I come. What cares disturb thy rest?  
 Why hast thou brought me to the shrine?  
 Doth some fresh grief afflict thy breast?  
 Why bring me to this seat divine?  
 Thou daughter of that chief, whose powers  
 Ploughed with a thousand keels the strand,  
 And ranged in arms shook Troy's proud towers  
 Beneath th' Atride's great command!

*Iphig.* O ye attendant train,  
 How is my heart oppressed with woe!  
 What notes, save notes of grief, can flow,  
 A harsh and unmelodious strain?  
 My soul domestic ills oppress with dread,  
 And bid me mourn a brother dead.  
 What visions did my sleeping sense appal  
 In the past dark and midnight hour?  
 'Tis ruin, ruin all.  
 My father's house—it is no more;  
 No more is his illustrious line.  
 What dreadful deeds hath Argos known!  
 One only brother, Fate, was mine;  
 And dost thou rend him from me? Is he gone  
 To Pluto's dreary realms below?  
 For him, as dead, with pious care

This goblet I prepare ;  
And on the bosom of the earth shall flow  
Streams from the heifer mountain-bred,  
The grape's rich juice, and mixed with these  
The labour of the yellow bees,  
Libations soothing to the dead.  
Give me th' oblation ; let me hold  
The foaming goblet's hallowed gold.

O thou, the earth beneath,  
Who didst from Agamemnon spring,  
To thee deprived of vital breath  
I these libations bring.  
Accept them : to thy honoured tomb  
Never, ah ! never shall I come ;  
Never these golden tresses bear  
To place them there, there shed the tear :  
For from my country far, a hind  
There deemed as slain, my wild abode I find.

*Chorus.* To thee thy faithful train  
The Asiatic hymn will raise,  
A doleful, a barbaric strain,  
Responsive to thy lays,  
And steep in tears the mournful song,  
Notes which to the dead belong,  
Dismal notes attuned to woe  
By Pluto in the realms below :  
No sprightly air shall we employ  
To cheer the soul, and wake the sense of joy.

*Iphig.* Th' Atridæ are no more :  
Extinct their sceptre's golden light ;  
My father's house from its proud height  
Is fall'n : its ruins I deplore.  
Who of her kings at Argos holds his reign,  
Her kings once blest ? But Sorrow's train  
Rolls on impetuous for the rapid steeds  
Which o'er the strand with Pelops fly.  
From what atrocious deeds  
Starts the sun back, his sacred eye  
Of brightness, loathing, turned aside ?  
And fatal to their house arose  
From the rich Ram, Thessalia's golden pride,



Slaughter on slaughter, woes on woes.  
Thence from the dead of ages past  
Vengeance came rushing on its prey,  
And swept the race of Tantalus away :  
Fatal to thee its ruthless haste ;  
To me too fatal from the hour  
My mother wedded, from the night  
She gave me to life's opening light,  
Nursed by affliction's cruel power.  
Early to me the fates unkind  
To know what sorrow is assigned ;  
Me, Leda's daughter, hapless dame,  
First blooming offspring of her bed  
(A father's conduct here I blame),  
A joyless victim bred ;  
When o'er the strand of Aulis, in the pride  
Of beauty kindling flames of love,  
High on my splendid car I move,  
Betrothed to Thetis' son a bride :  
Ah hapless bride, to all the train  
Of Grecian fair preferred in vain !  
But now a stranger on this strand,  
'Gainst which the wild waves beat,  
I hold my dreary, joyless seat,  
Far distant from my native land ;  
Nor nuptial bed is mine, nor child, nor friend.  
At Argos now no more I raise  
The festal song in Juno's praise ;  
Nor o'er the loom sweet sounding bend,  
As the creative shuttle flies,  
Give forms of Titans fierce to rise,  
And dreadful with her purple spear  
Image Athenian Pallas there.  
But on this barb'rous shore  
Th' unhappy stranger's fate I moan,  
The ruthless altar stained with gore,  
His deep and dying groan :  
And for each tear that weeps his woes,  
From me a tear of pity flows.  
Of these the sad remembrance now must sleep :  
A brother dead, ah me ! I weep :  
At Argos him by fate oppress

I left an infant at the breast.

A beauteous bud, whose opening charms

Then blossomed in his mother's arms,

Orestes, born to high command,

Th' imperial sceptre of the Argive land.

*Chorus.* Leaving the sea-washed shore a herdsman comes  
Speeding, with some fresh tidings to thee fraught.

HERDSMAN, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

*Herd.* Daughter of Agamemnon, and bright gem  
Of Clytemnestra, hear strange things from me.

*Iphig.* And what of terror doth thy tale import?

*Herd.* Two youths, swift-rowing 'twixt the clashing rocks  
Of our wild sea, are landed on the beach ;  
A grateful offering at Diana's shrine,  
And victims to the goddess. Haste, prepare  
The sacred lavers and the previous rites.

*Iphig.* Whence are the strangers? from what country named?

*Herd.* From Greece: this only, nothing more, I know.

*Iphig.* Didst thou not hear what names the strangers  
bear?

*Herd.* One by the other was called Pylades.

*Iphig.* How is the stranger, his companion, named?

*Herd.* This none of us can tell: we heard it not.

*Iphig.* How saw you them? how seized them? by what  
chance?

*Herd.* 'Midst the rude cliffs that o'er the Euxine hang——

*Iphig.* And what concern have herdsmen with the sea?

*Herd.* To wash our herds in the salt wave we came.

*Iphig.* To what I asked return: how seized you them?  
Tell me the manner; this I wish to know.

For slow the victims come, nor hath some while  
The altar of the goddess, as was wont,  
Been crimsoned with the streams of Grecian blood.

*Herd.* Our herds, which in the forests feed, we drove  
Amidst the tide that rushes to the shore  
'Twixt the Symplegades: it was the place  
Where in the rifted rock the chafing surge  
Hath hollowed a rude cave, the haunt of those  
Whose quest is purple. Of our number there  
A herdsman saw two youths, and back returned

With soft and silent step ; then pointing said,  
"Do you not see them? These are deities  
That sit there." One, who with religious awe  
Revered the gods, with hands uplifted prayed,  
His eyes fixed on them : "Son of the sea-nymph  
Leucothoe, guardian of the lab'ring bark,  
Our Lord Palæmon, be propitious to us!  
Or sit you on our shores, bright sons of Jove,  
Castor and Pollux! Or the glorious boast  
Of Nereus, father of the noble choir  
Of fifty Nereids?" One, whose untaught mind  
Audacious folly hardened 'gainst the sense  
Of holy awe, scoffed at his prayers, and said:  
"These are wrecked mariners, that take their seat  
In the cleft rock through fear, as they have heard  
Our prescribed rite, that here we sacrifice  
The stranger." To the greater part he seemed  
Well to have spoken, and we judged it meet  
To seize the victims, by our country's law  
Due to the goddess. Of the stranger youths  
One at this instant started from the rock;  
Awhile he stood, and wildly tossed his head,  
And groaned, his loose arms trembling all their length,  
Convulsed with madness: as a hunter loud  
Then cried: "Dost thou behold her, Pylades,  
Dost thou not see this dragon fierce from hell  
Rushing to kill me, and against me rousing  
Her horrid vipers? See this other here,  
Emitting fire and slaughter from her vests,  
Sails on her wings, my mother in her arms  
Bearing, to hurl this mass of rock upon me!  
Ah, she will kill me! Whither shall I fly?"  
His visage might we see no more the same,  
And his voice varied, now the roar of bulls,  
The howl of dogs now uttering, mimic sounds  
Sent by the madd'ning Furies, as they say.  
Together thronging, as of death assured,  
We sit in silence: but he drew his sword,  
And like a lion rushing 'midst our herds  
Plunged in their sides the weapon, weening thus  
To drive the Furies, till the briny wave  
Foamed with their blood. But when among our herds

We saw this havoc made, we all 'gan rouse  
To arms, and blew our sounding shells t' alarm  
The neighb'ring peasants ; for we thought in fight  
Rude herdsmen to these youthful strangers, trained  
To arms, ill matched ; and forthwith to our aid  
Flocked numbers. But, his frenzy of its force  
Abating, on the earth the stranger falls,  
Foam bursting from his mouth ? But when we saw  
Th' advantage, each adventured on, and hurled  
What might annoy him fall'n : the other youth  
Wiped off the foam, took of his person care,  
His fine-wrought robe spread over him, with heed  
The flying stones observing warded off  
The wounds, and each kind office to his friend  
Attentively performed. His sense returned,  
The stranger started up, and soon perceived  
The tide of foes that rolled impetuous on,  
The danger and distress that closed them round.  
He heaved a sigh. An unremitting storm  
Of stones we poured, and each incited each.  
Then we his dreadful exhortation heard :  
"Pylades, we shall die ; but let us die  
With glory ; draw thy sword, and follow me."  
But when we saw the enemies advance  
With brandished swords, the steep heights crowned  
with wood,  
We fill in flight : but others, if one flies,  
Press on them ; if again they drive these back,  
What before fled turns, with a storm of stones  
Assaulting them ; but, what exceeds belief,  
Hurled by a thousand hands not one could hit  
The victims of the goddess : scarce at length,  
Not by brave daring seized we them, but 'round  
We closed upon them, and their swords with  
stones  
Beat, wily, from their hands, for on their knees  
They through fatigue had sunk upon the ground.  
We bare them to the monarch of this land :  
He viewed them, and without delay to thee  
Sent them, devoted to the cleansing vase  
And to the altar. Victims such as these,  
O virgin, wish to find ; for if such youths

Thou offer, for thy slaughter Greece will pay,  
Her wrongs to thee at Aulis well avenged.

*Chorus.* These things are wonderful, which thou hast told  
Of him, whoe'er he be, the youth from Greece  
Arrived on this inhospitable shore.

*Iphig.* 'Tis well. Go thou, and bring the strangers hither.  
What here is to be done shall be our care.  
O my unhappy heart! before this hour  
To strangers thou wast gentle, always touched  
With pity, and with tears their tears repaid,  
When Grecians, natives of my country, came  
Into my hands: but from the dreams, which prompt  
To deeds ungentle, showing that no more  
Orestes views the sun's fair light, whoe'er  
Ye are that hither come, me will you find  
Relentless now. This is the truth, my friends:  
My heart is rent; and never will the wretch,  
Who feels affliction's cruel tortures, bear  
Goodwill to those that are more fortunate.  
Never came gale from Jove, nor flying bark,  
Which 'twixt the dang'rous rocks of th' Euxine sea  
Brought Helen hither, who my ruin wrought,  
Nor Menelaus; that on them my foul wrongs  
I might repay, and with an Aulis here  
Requite the Aulis there, where I was seized,  
And, as a heifer, by the Grecians slain.  
My father too, who gave me birth, was priest.  
Ah me! the sad remembrance of those ills  
Yet lives: how often did I stroke thy cheek,  
And, hanging on thy knees, address thee thus:  
Alas, my father! I by thee am led  
A bride to bridal rites unblest and base:  
Them, whilst by thee I bleed, my mother hymns,  
And th' Argive dames, with hymeneal strains,  
And with the jocund pipe the house resounds:  
But at the altar I by thee am slain;  
For Pluto was th' Achilles, not the son  
Of Pelcus, whom to me thou didst announce  
Th' affianced bridegroom, and by guile didst bring  
To bloody nuptials in the rolling car.  
But, o'er mine eyes the veil's fine texture spread,  
This brother in my hands, who now is lost,

I clasped not, though his sister, did not press  
My lips to his through virgin modesty,  
As going to the house of Peleus : then  
Each fond embrace I to another time  
Deferred, as soon to Argos to return.  
If, O unhappy brother, thou art dead,  
From what a state, thy father's envied height  
Of glory, loved Orestes, art thou torn !—  
These false rules of the goddess much I blame :  
Whoe'er of mortals is with slaughter stained,  
Or hath at childbirth given assisting hands,  
Or chanced to touch aught dead, she as impure  
Drives from her altars ; yet herself delights  
In human victims bleeding at her shrine.  
Ne'er did Latona, from th' embrace of Jove,  
Bring forth such inconsistency : I then deem  
The feast of Tantalus, where gods were guests,  
Unworthy of belief, as that they fed  
On his son's flesh delighted : and I think  
These people, who themselves have a wild joy  
In shedding human blood, their savage guilt  
Charge on the goddess : for this truth I hold,  
None of the gods is evil or doth wrong.

## CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

Ye rocks, ye clashing rocks, whose brow  
Frowns o'er the darkened deeps below,  
Whose wild inhospitable wave,  
From Argos flying and her native spring,  
The virgin once was known to brave,  
Tormented with the Bryze's madd'ning sting,  
From Europe when the rude sea o'er  
She passed to Asia's adverse shore ;  
Who are these hapless youths, that dare to land,  
Leaving those soft irriguous meads,  
Where, his green margin fringed with reeds,  
Eurotas rolls his ample tide,  
Or Dirce's hallowed waters glide,  
And touch this barb'rous, stranger-hating strand,  
The altars where a virgin dew,  
And blood the pillared shrine imbrues ?

*Strophe 2.*

Did they with oars impetuous sweep,  
 Rank answering rank, the foamy deep,  
 And wing their bark with flying sails,  
 To raise their humble fortune their desire,  
 Eager to catch the rising gales,  
 Their bosoms with the love of gain on fire?  
 For sweet is Hope, to man's fond breast,  
 The hope of gain, insatiate guest,  
 Though on her oft attends Misfortune's train;  
 For daring man she tempts to brave  
 The dangers of the boist'rous wave,  
 And leads him heedless of his fate  
 Through many a distant, barb'rous state;  
 Vain his opinions, his pursuits are vain!  
 Boundless o'er some her power is shown,  
 But some her temp'rate influence own.

*Antistrophe 1.*

How did they pass the dang'rous rocks,  
 Clashing with rude, tremendous shocks?  
 How pass the savage-howling shore  
 Where once th' unhappy Phineus held his reign,  
 And sleep affrighted flies its roar,  
 Steering their rough course o'er this boist'rous main,  
 Formed in a ring beneath whose waves  
 The Nereid train in high-arched caves  
 Weave the light dance, and raise the sprightly song,  
 Whilst whisp'ring in their swelling sails  
 Soft Zephyrs breathe, or southern gales  
 Piping amidst their tackling play,  
 As their bark ploughs its wat'ry way  
 Those hoary cliffs, the haunts of birds, along,  
 To that wild strand, the rapid race  
 Where once Achilles deigned to grace?

*Antistrophe 2.*

Oh that from Troy some chance would bear  
 Leda's loved daughter, fatal fair  
 (The royal virgin's vows are mine),  
 That her bright tresses rolled in crimson dew,  
 Her warm blood flowing at this shrine,

The altar of the goddess might imbrue,  
And Vengeance, righteous to repay  
Her former mischiefs, seize her prey !  
But with what rapture should I hear his voice,  
If one this shore should reach from Greece,  
And bid the toils of slav'ry cease !  
Or might I in the hour of rest  
With pleasing dreams of Greece be blest,  
So in my house, my native land rejoice,  
In sleep enjoy the pleasing strain  
For happiness restored again !

*Iphig.* But the two youths, their hands fast bound in chains,  
The late-seized victims to the goddess, come.  
Silence, my friends : for destined at the shrine  
To bleed the Grecian strangers near approach,  
And no false tidings did the herdsman bring.

*Chorus.* Goddess revered, if grateful to thy soul  
This state presents such sacrifice, accept  
The victims, which the custom of this land  
Gives thee, but deemed unholy by the Greeks.

IPHIGENIA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

*Iphig.* No more ; that to the goddess each due rite  
Be well performed shall be my care. Unchain  
The strangers' hands, that, hallowed as they are,  
They may no more be bound. Go you, prepare  
Within the temple what the rites require.  
Unhappy youths, what mother brought you forth ?  
Your father who ? Your sister, if perchance  
Ye have a sister, of what youths deprived ?  
For brother she shall have no more. Who knows  
Whom such misfortunes may attend ? For dark  
What the gods' will creeps on ; and none can tell  
The ills to come : this fortune from the sight  
Obscures. But, O unhappy strangers, say  
Whence came you ? Sailed you long since for this  
land ?

But long will be your absence from your homes,  
For ever, in the dreary realms below.

*Orestes.* Lady, whoe'er thou art, why for these things



Dost thou lament? Why mourn for ills, which soon  
 Will fall on us? Him I esteem unwise,  
 Who, when he sees death near, tries to o'ercome  
 Its terrors with bewailings, without hope  
 Of safety: ill he adds to ill, and makes  
 His folly known, yet dies. We must give way  
 To fortune: therefore mourn not thou for us:  
 We know, we are acquainted with your rites.

*Iphig.* Which of you by the name of Pylades  
 Is called? This first it is my wish to know.

*Orestes.* If aught of pleasure that may give thee, he.

*Iphig.* A native of what Grecian state, declare.

*Orestes.* What profit, knowing this, wouldst thou obtain?

*Iphig.* And are you brothers, of one mother born?

*Orestes.* Brothers by friendship, lady, not by birth.

*Iphig.* To thee what name was by thy father given?

*Orestes.* With just cause I Unhappy might be called.

*Iphig.* I ask not that; to fortune that ascribe.

*Orestes.* Dying unknown rude scoffs I shall avoid.

*Iphig.* Wilt thou refuse? Why are thy thoughts so high?

*Orestes.* My body thou mayst kill, but not my name.

*Iphig.* Wilt thou not say a native of what state?

*Orestes.* The question nought avails, since I must die.

*Iphig.* What hinders thee from granting me this grace?

*Orestes.* Th' illustrious Argos I my country boast.

*Iphig.* By the gods, stranger, is thy birth from thence?

*Orestes.* My birth is from Mycenæ, once the blest.

*Iphig.* Dost thou an exile fly, or by what fate?

*Orestes.* Of my free will, in part not free, I fly.

*Iphig.* Wilt thou then tell me what I wish to know?

*Orestes.* Whate'er is foreign to my private griefs.

*Iphig.* To my dear wish from Argos art thou come.

*Orestes.* Not to my wish: but if to thine, enjoy it.

*Iphig.* Troy, whose fame spreads so wide, perchance thou  
 knowst.

*Orestes.* Oh that I ne'er had known her, e'en in dreams!

*Iphig.* They say she is no more, by war destroyed.

*Orestes.* It is so: you have heard no false reports.

*Iphig.* Is Helena with Menelaus returned?

*Orestes.* She is: and one I love her coming rues.

*Iphig.* Where is she? Me too she of old hath wronged.

*Orestes.* At Sparta with her former lord she dwells.

- Iphig.* By Greece, and not by me alone, abhorred !  
*Orestes.* I from her nuptials have my share of grief.  
*Iphig.* And are the Greeks, as fame reports, returned ?  
*Orestes.* How briefly all things dost thou ask at once ?  
*Iphig.* This favour, ere thou die, I wish t' obtain.  
*Orestes.* Ask then : since such thy wish, I will inform thee.  
*Iphig.* Calchas, a prophet, came he back from Troy ?  
*Orestes.* He perished : at Mycenæ such the fame.  
*Iphig.* Goddess revered ! But doth Ulysses live ?  
*Orestes.* He lives they say ; but is not yet returned.  
*Iphig.* Perish the wretch, nor see his country more !  
*Orestes.* Wish him not ill, for all with him is ill.  
*Iphig.* But doth the son of sea-born Thetis live ?  
*Orestes.* He lives not : vain his nuptial rites at Aulis.  
*Iphig.* That all was fraud, as those, who felt it, say.  
*Orestes.* But who art thou, inquiring thus of Greece ?  
*Iphig.* I am from thence, in early youth undone.  
*Orestes.* Thou hast a right t' inquire what there hath passed.  
*Iphig.* What knowst thou of the chief, men call the blest ?  
*Orestes.* Who ? Of the blest was not the chief I knew.  
*Iphig.* The royal Agamemnon, son of Atreus.  
*Orestes.* Of him I know not, lady ; cease to ask.  
*Iphig.* Nay, by the gods, tell me, and cheer my soul.  
*Orestes.* He's dead, th' unhappy chief ; no single ill.  
*Iphig.* Dead ! By what adverse fate ? Oh wretched me !  
*Orestes.* Why mourn for this ? How doth it touch thy breast ?  
*Iphig.* The glories of his former state I mourn.  
*Orestes.* Dreadfully murdered by a woman's hand.  
*Iphig.* How wretched she that slew him, he thus slain !  
*Orestes.* Now then forbear : of him inquire no more.  
*Iphig.* This only ; lives th' unhappy monarch's wife ?  
*Orestes.* She, lady, is no more, slain by her son.  
*Iphig.* Alas, the ruined house ! What his intent ?  
*Orestes.* T' avenge on her his noble father slain.  
*Iphig.* An ill, but righteous deed, how justly done !  
*Orestes.* Though righteous, by the gods he is not blest.  
*Iphig.* Hath Agamemnon other offspring left ?  
*Orestes.* He left one virgin daughter, named Electra.  
*Iphig.* Of her, that died a victim, is aught said ?  
*Orestes.* This only, dead she sees the light no more.  
*Iphig.* Unhappy she ! the father too, who slew her !

*Orestes.* For a bad woman she unseemly died.

*Iphig.* At Argos lives the murdered father's son?

*Orestes.* Nowhere he lives, poor wretch, and everywhere.

*Iphig.* False dreams, farewell : for nothing you import.

*Orestes.* Nor are those gods, that have the name of wise,  
Less false than fleeting dreams. In things divine,  
And in things human, great confusion reigns.  
One thing is left ; that, not unwise of soul,  
Obedient to the prophet's voice he perished ;  
For that he perished they, who know, report.

*Chorus.* What shall we know, what of our parents know?  
If yet they live, or not, who can inform us?

*Iphig.* Hear me : this converse prompts a thought, which  
gives

Promise of good, ye youths of Greece, to you,  
To these, and me ; thus may it well be done,  
If willing to my purpose all assent.  
Wilt thou, if I shall save thee, go for me  
A messenger to Argos, to my friends  
Charged with a letter, which a captive wrote,  
Who pitied me, nor murd'rous thought my hand,  
But that he died beneath the law, these rites  
The goddess deeming just? For from that hour  
I have not found who might to Argos bear  
Himself my message, back with life returned,  
Or send to any of my friends my letter.  
Thou therefore, since it seems thou dost not bear  
Ill will to me, and dost Mycenæ know,  
And those I wish t' address, be safe, and live,  
No base reward for a light letter life  
Receiving : and let him, since thus the state  
Requires, without thee to the goddess bleed.

*Orestes.* Virgin unknown, well hast thou said in all  
Save this, that to the goddess he should bleed  
A victim ; that were heavy grief indeed.  
I steered the vessel to these ills, he sailed  
Attendant on my toils : to gain thy grace  
By his destruction, and withdraw myself  
From sufferings, were unjust. Thus let it be :  
Give him the letter ; to fulfil thy wish  
To Argos he will bear it : me let him,  
Who claims that office, slay. Base is his soul,

Who in calamities involves his friends,  
And saves himself: this is a friend, whose life,  
Dear to me as my own, I would preserve.

*Iphig.* Excellent spirit! From some noble root  
It shows thee sprung, and to thy friends a friend  
Sincere: of those that share my blood if one  
Remains, such may he be; for I am not  
Without a brother, strangers, from my sight  
Though distant now. Since then thy wish is such,  
Him will I send to Argos: he shall bear  
My letter, thou shalt die; for this desire  
Hath strong possession of thy noble soul.

*Orestes.* Who then shall do the dreadful deed, and slay  
me?

*Iphig.* I: to atone the goddess is my charge.

*Orestes.* A charge unenvied, virgin, and unbled.

*Iphig.* Necessity constrains: I must obey.

*Orestes.* Wilt thou, a woman, plunge the sword in men?

*Iphig.* No: but thy locks to sprinkle round is mine.

*Orestes.* Whose then, if I may ask, the bloody deed?

*Iphig.* To some within the temple this belongs.

*Orestes.* What tomb is destined to receive my corse?

*Iphig.* The hallowed fire within, and a dark cave.

*Orestes.* Oh that a sister's hand might wrap these limbs!

*Iphig.* Vain wish, unhappy youth, whoe'er thou art,  
Hast thou conceived; for from this barbarous  
land

Far is her dwelling. Yet of what my power  
Permits, since thou from Argos drawst thy birth,  
No grace will I omit; for in thy tomb  
I will place much of ornament, and pour  
The dulcet labour of the yellow bee,  
From mountain flowers extracted, on thy pyre.  
But I will go, and from the temple bring  
The letter: yet 'gainst me no hostile thought  
Conceive. You that attend here, guard them  
well,

But without chains. To one, whom most I love  
Of all my friends, to Argos I shall send  
Tidings perchance unlooked for; and this letter,  
Declaring those, whom he thought dead, alive,  
Shall bear him an assured and solid joy.

PYLADES, ORESTES, CHORUS.

*Chorus.* Thee, o'er whose limbs the bloody drops shall soon  
Be from the lavers sprinkled, I lament.

*Orestes.* This asks no pity, strangers : but farewell.

*Chorus.* Thee, for thy happy fate we reverence, youth,  
Who to thy country shalt again return.

*Pylades.* To friends unwished, who leave their friends to die

*Chorus.* Painful dismission ! Which shall I esteem  
Most lost, alas, alas ! which most undone !  
For doubts my wav'ring judgment yet divide,  
If chief for thee my sighs should swell, or thee.

*Orestes.* By the gods, Pylades, is thy mind touched  
In manner like as mine ?

*Pylades.* I cannot tell ;  
Nor to thy question have I to reply.

*Orestes.* Who is this virgin ? With what zeal for Greece  
Made she inquiries of us what the toils  
At Troy, if yet the Greeks were returned,  
And Calchas, from the flight of birds who formed  
Presages of the future ? And she named  
Achilles : with what tenderness bewailed  
Th' unhappy Agamemnon ! Of his wife  
She asked me, of his children : thence her race  
This unknown virgin draws, an Argive ; else  
Ne'er would she send this letter, nor have wished  
To know these things, as if she bore a share,  
If Argos flourish, in its prosperous state.

*Pylades.* Such were my thoughts (but thou hast given the  
words,

Preventing me), of every circumstance,  
Save one : the fate of kings all know, whose state  
Holds aught of rank. But pass to other thoughts.

*Orestes.* What ? Share them ; so thou best mayst be  
formed.

*Pylades.* That thou shouldst die, and I behold this light,  
Were base : with thee I sailed, with thee to die  
Becomes me ; else shall I obtain the name  
Of a vile coward through the Argive state,  
And the deep vales of Phocis. Most will think,  
For most think ill, that by betraying thee  
I saved myself, home to return alone :  
Or haply that I slew thee, and thy death

Contrived, that in the ruin of thy house  
Thy empire I might grasp, to me devolved  
As wedded to thy sister, now sole heir.  
These things I fear, and hold them infamous.  
Behoves me then with thee to die, with thee  
To bleed a victim, on the pyre with thine  
To give my body to the flames ; for this  
Becomes me as thy friend, who dread reproach.

*Orestes.* Speak more auspicious words : 'tis mine to bear  
Ills that are mine : and single when the woe,  
I would not bear it double. What thou sayst  
Is vile and infamous, would light on me,  
Should I cause thee to die, who in my toils  
Hast borne a share : to me, who from the gods  
Suffer afflictions which I suffer, death  
Is not unwelcome : thou art happy, thine  
An unpolluted and a prosperous house ;  
Mine impious and unblest. If thou art saved,  
And from my sister, whom I gave to thee  
Betrothed thy bride, art blessed with sons, my  
name  
May yet remain, nor all my father's house  
In total ruin sink. Go then, and live ;  
Dwell in the mansion of thy ancestors.  
And when thou comst to Greece, to Argos famed  
For warrior-steeds, by this right hand I charge thee  
Raise a sepulchral mound, and on it place  
A monument to me ; and to my tomb  
Her tears, her tresses let my sister give :  
And say that by an Argive woman's hand  
I perished, to the altar's bloody rites  
A hallowed victim. Never let thy soul  
Betray my sister, for thou seest her state  
Of friends how destitute, her father's house  
How desolate. Farewell ! Of all my friends  
Thee have I found most friendly, from my youth  
Trained up with me, in all my sylvan sports  
Thou dear associate, and through many toils  
Thou faithful partner of my miseries.  
Me Phœbus, though a prophet, hath deceived,  
And meditating guile hath driven me far  
From Greece, of former oracles ashamed ;

To him resigned, obedient to his words,  
I slew my mother, and my meed is death.

*Pylades.* Yes, I will raise thy tomb : thy sister's bed  
I never will betray, unhappy youth,  
For I will hold thee dearer when thou'rt dead,  
Than while thou livest ; nor hath yet the voice  
Of Phœbus quite destroyed thee, though thou stand  
To slaughter nigh : but sometimes mighty woes  
Yield mighty changes, so when fortune wills.

*Orestes.* Forbear : the words of Phœbus nought avail me ;  
For passing from the shrine the virgin comes.

IPHIGENIA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

*Iphig.* Go you away [*to the Guards*], and in the shrine prepare  
What those, who o'er the rites preside, require.—  
Here, strangers, is the letter folded close.  
What I would further, hear : the mind of man  
In dangers, and again from fear relieved  
Of safety when assured, is not the same :  
I therefore fear lest he, who should convey  
To Argos this epistle, when returned  
Safe to his native country will neglect  
My letter, as a thing of little worth.

*Orestes.* What wouldst thou then ? What is thy anxious  
thought ?

*Iphig.* This ; let him give an oath that he will bear  
To Argos this epistle to those friends  
To whom it is my ardent wish to send it.

*Orestes.* And wilt thou in return give him thy oath ?

*Iphig.* That I will do, or will not do, say what.

*Orestes.* To send him from this barbarous shore alive.

*Iphig.* That's just ; how should he bear my letter else ?

*Orestes.* But will the monarch to these things assent ?

*Iphig.* By me induced. Him I will see embarked.

*Orestes.* Swear then ; and thou propose the righteous oath.

*Iphig.* This, let him say, he to my friends will give.

*Pylades.* Well ; to thy friends this letter I will give.

*Iphig.* Thee will I send safe through the dark'ning rocks.

*Pylades.* What god dost thou invoke t' attest thy oath ?

*Iphig.* Diana, at whose shrine high charge I hold.

*Pylades.* And I heaven's potent king, the awful Jove.

*Iphig.* But if thou slight thy oath, and do me wrong?

*Pylades.* Never may I return. But if thou fail,  
And save me not?

*Iphig.* Then never whilst I live  
May I revisit my loved Argos more.

*Pylades.* One thing, not mentioned, thy attention claims.

*Iphig.* If honour owns it, this will touch us both.

*Pylades.* Let me in this be pardoned, if the bark  
Be lost, and with it in the surging waves  
Thy letter perish, and I naked gain  
The shore, no longer binding be the oath.

*Iphig.* Knowst thou what I will do? For various ills  
Arise to those that plough the dangerous deep.  
What in this letter is contained, what here  
Is written, all I will repeat to thee,  
That thou mayst bear my message to my friends.  
'Gainst danger thus I guard: if thou preserve  
The letter, that though silent will declare  
My purport: if it perish in the sea  
Saving thyself my words too thou wilt save.

*Pylades.* Well hast thou said touching the gods and me.  
Say then, to whom at Argos shall I bear  
This letter? What relate as heard from thee?

*Iphig.* This message to Orestes, to the son  
Of Agamemnon bear: "She, who was slain  
At Aulis, Iphigenia, sends thee this:  
She lives, but not to those who then were there."

*Orestes.* Where is she? From the dead returned to life?

*Iphig.* She whom thou seest; but interrupt me not.  
To Argos, O my brother, ere I die  
Bear me from this barbaric land, and far  
Remove me from this altar's bloody rites,  
At which to slay the stranger is my charge.

*Orestes.* What shall I say? Where are we, Pylades?

*Iphig.* Or on thy house for vengeance will I call,  
Orestes—Twice repeated, learn the name.

*Orestes.* Ye gods!

*Iphig.* In my cause why invoke the gods?

*Orestes.* Nothing; proceed. My thoughts were wand'ring  
wide.

Strange things of thee unasked I soon shall learn.

*Iphig.* Tell him the goddess saved me, in exchange



A hind presenting, which my father slew  
 A victim, deeming that he plunged his sword  
 Deep in my breast; me in this land she placed.  
 Thou hast my charge; and this my letter speaks.

*Pyzades.* Oh thou hast bound me with an easy oath;  
 What I have sworn with honest purpose, long  
 Defer I not, but thus discharge mine oath.  
 To thee a letter from thy sister, lo,  
 I bear, Orestes; and I give it thee.

*Orestes.* I do receive it, but forbear t' unclose  
 Its foldings, greater pleasure first t' enjoy  
 Than words can give. My sister, O most dear,  
 Astonished e'en to disbelief I throw  
 Mine arms around thee with a fond embrace,  
 In transport at the wond'rous things I hear.

*Chorus.* Stranger, thou dost not well with hands profane  
 Thus to pollute the priestess of the shrine,  
 Grasping her garments hallowed from the touch.

*Orestes.* My sister, my dear sister, from one sire,  
 From Agamemnon sprung, turn not away,  
 Holding thy brother thus beyond all hope.

*Iphig.* My brother! Thou my brother! Wilt thou not  
 Unsay these words? At Argos far he dwells.

*Orestes.* Thy brother, O unhappy! is not there.

*Iphig.* Thee did the Spartan Tyndarus bring forth?

*Orestes.* And from the son of Pelops' son I sprung.

*Iphig.* What sayst thou? Canst thou give me proof:  
 this?

*Orestes.* I can: ask something of my father's house.

*Iphig.* Nay, it is thine to speak, mine to attend.

*Orestes.* First let me mention things which I have heard  
 Electra speak: to thee is known the strife  
 Which fierce 'twixt Atreus and Thyestes rose.

*Iphig.* Yes, I have heard it; for the golden ram.

*Orestes.* In the rich texture didst thou not inweave it?

*Iphig.* O thou most dear! Thou windest near my heart.

*Orestes.* And image in the web th' averted sun?

*Iphig.* In the fine threads that figure did I work.

*Orestes.* For Aulis did thy mother bathe thy limbs?

*Iphig.* I know it, to unlucky spousals led.

*Orestes.* Why to thy mother didst thou send thy locks?

*Iphig.* Devoted for my body to the tomb.

*Orestes.* What I myself have seen I now as proofs  
Will mention. In thy father's house hung high  
Within thy virgin chambers the old spear  
Of Pelops, which he brandished when he slew  
CEnomaus, and won his beauteous bride,  
The virgin Hippodamia, Pisa's boast.

*Iphig.* O thou most dear, for thou art he, most dear  
Acknowledged, thee, Orestes, do I hold,  
From Argos, from thy country distant far?

*Orestes.* And hold I thee, my sister, long deemed dead?  
Grief mixed with joy, and tears, not taught by woe  
To rise, stand melting in thy eyes and mine.

*Iphig.* Thee yet an infant in thy nurse's arms  
I left, a babe I left thee in the house.  
Thou art more happy, O my soul, than speech  
Knows to express. What shall I say? 'Tis all  
Surpassing wonder and the power of words.

*Orestes.* May we together from this hour be blest!

*Iphig.* An unexpected pleasure, O my friends,  
Have I received; yet fear I from my hands  
Lest to the air it fly. O sacred hearths  
Raised by the Cyclops! O my country, loved  
Mycenæ! Now that thou didst give me birth  
I thank thee; now I thank thee that my youth  
Thou trainedst, since my brother thou hast trained,  
A beam of light, the glory of his house.

*Orestes.* We in our race are happy; but our life,  
My sister, by misfortunes is unhappy.

*Iphig.* I was, I know, unhappy when the sword  
My father, frenetic, pointed at my neck.

*Orestes.* Ah me! methinks e'en now I see thee there.

*Iphig.* When to Achilles, brother, not a bride  
I to the sacrifice by guile was led,  
And tears and groans the altar compassed round.

*Orestes.* Alas the lovers there!

*Iphig.* I mourned the deed  
My father dared; unlike a father's love,  
Cruel, unlike a father's love, to me.

*Orestes.* Ill deeds succeed to ill; if thou hadst slain  
Thy brother, by some god impelled, what griefs  
Must have been thine at such a dreadful deed!

*Iphig.* Dreadful, my brother, oh how dreadful! Scarce

Hast thou escaped a foul, unhallowed death,  
 Slain by my hands. But how will these things end?  
 What fortune will assist me? What safe means  
 Shall I devise to send thee from this state,  
 From slaughter, to thy native land, to Argos,  
 Ere with thy blood the cruel sword be stained?  
 This to devise, O my unhappy soul!  
 This to devise is thine. Wilt thou by land,  
 Thy bark deserted, speed thy flight on foot?  
 Perils await thee 'midst these barbarous tribes  
 Through pathless wilds. And 'twixt the clashing rocks  
 Narrow the passage for the flying bark,  
 And long. Unhappy, ah unhappy me!  
 What god, what mortal, what unlooked-for chance  
 Will expedite our dangerous way, and show  
 Two sprung from Atreus a release from ills?

*Chorus.* What having seen and heard I shall relate  
 Is marvellous, and passes fabled tales.

*Pyllades.* When after absence long, Orestes, friend  
 Meets friend, embraces will express their joy.  
 Behoves us now, bidding farewell to grief  
 And heedful to obtain the glorious name  
 Of safety, from this barbarous land to fly.  
 The wise, of fortune not regardless, seize  
 Th' occasion, and to happiness advance.

*Orestes.* Well hast thou said; and Fortune here, I ween,  
 Will aid us: to the firm and strenuous mind  
 More potent works the influence divine.

*Iphig.* Nothing shall check, nothing restrain my speech:  
 First will I question thee what fortune waits  
 Electra: this to know would yield me joy.

*Orestes.* With him she dwells, and happy is her life.

*Iphig.* Whence then is he? and from what father sprung?

*Orestes.* From Phocis: Strophius is his father named.

*Iphig.* By Atreus' daughter to my blood allied?

*Orestes.* Nearly allied: my only faithful friend.

*Iphig.* He was not then, me when my father slew.

*Orestes.* Childless was Strophius for some length of time.

*Iphig.* O thou, the husband of my sister, hail!

*Orestes.* More than relation, my preserver too.

*Iphig.* But to thy mother why that dreadful deed?

*Orestes.* Of that no more: I'ave my father's death.

- Iphig.* But for what cause did she her husband slay?  
*Orestes.* Of her inquire not : thou wouldst blush to hear.  
*Iphig.* The eyes of Argos now are raised to thee.  
*Orestes.* There Menelaus is lord ; I, outcast, fly.  
*Iphig.* Hath he then wronged his brother's ruined house ?  
*Orestes.* Not so : the Furies fright me from the land.  
*Iphig.* The madness this, which seized thee on the shore ?  
*Orestes.* I was not first beheld unhappy there.  
*Iphig.* Stern powers ; they haunt thee for thy mother's blood.  
*Orestes.* And ruthless make me champ the bloody bit.  
*Iphig.* Why to this region hast thou steered thy course ?  
*Orestes.* Commanded by Apollo's voice I come.  
*Iphig.* With that intent ? if that may be disclosed.  
*Orestes.* I will inform thee, though to length of speech  
 This leads. When vengeance from my hands o'ertook  
 My mother's deed, foul deeds which let me pass  
 In silence, by the Furies' fierce assaults  
 To flight I was impelled : to Athens then  
 Apollo sent me, that, my cause there heard,  
 I might appease the vengeful powers, whose names  
 May not be uttered. The tribunal there  
 Is holy, which for Mars when stained with blood  
 Jove in old times established. There arrived  
 None willingly received me, by the gods  
 As one abhorred ; and they, who felt the touch  
 Of shame, the hospitable board alone  
 Yielded, and though one common roof beneath,  
 Their silence showing they disdained to hold  
 Converse with me, I took from them apart  
 A lone repast ; to each was placed a bowl  
 Of the same measure ; this they filled with wine,  
 And bathed their spirits in delight. Unmeet  
 I deemed it to express offence at those  
 Who entertained me, but in silence grieved,  
 Showing a cheer as though I marked it not,  
 And sighed for that I shed my mother's blood.  
 A feast, I hear, at Athens is ordained  
 From this my evil plight, e'en yet observed,  
 In which the equal-measured bowl then used  
 Is by that people held in honour high.  
 But when to the tribunal on the mount  
 Of Mars I came, one stand I took, and one

The eldest of the Furies opposite :  
 The cause was heard touching my mother's blood,  
 And Phœbus saved me by his evidence ;  
 Equal, by Pallas numbered, were the votes,  
 And I from doom of blood victorious freed.  
 Such of the Furies as there sate, appeased  
 By the just sentence, nigh the court resolved  
 To fix their seat ; but others, whom the law  
 Appeased not, with relentless tortures still  
 Pursued me, till I reached the hallowed soil  
 Of Phœbus. Stretched before his shrine I swore  
 Foodless to waste my wretched life away,  
 Unless the god, by whom I was undone,  
 Would save me. From the golden tripod burst  
 The voice divine, and sent me to this shore,  
 Commanding me to bear the image hence,  
 Which fell from Jove, and in th' Athenian land  
 To fix it. What th' oracular voice assigned  
 My safety, do thou aid. If we obtain  
 The statue of the goddess, I no more  
 With madness shall be tortured, but this arm  
 Shall place thee in my bark, which ploughs the waves  
 With many an oar, and to Mycenæ safe  
 Bear thee again. Show then a sister's love,  
 O thou most dear, preserve thy father's house,  
 Preserve me too ; for me destruction waits,  
 And all the race of Pelops, it we bear not  
 This heaven-descended image from the shrine.

*Chorus.* The anger of the gods hath raged severe,  
 And plunged the race of Tantalus in woes.

*Iphig.* Ere thy arrival here, a fond desire  
 To be again at Argos, and to see  
 Thee, my loved brother, filled my soul. Thy wish  
 Is my warm wish, to free thee from thy toils,  
 And from its ruins raise my father's house ;  
 Nor harbour I 'gainst him, that slew me, thought  
 Of harsh resentment : from thy blood my hands  
 Would I keep pure, thy house I would preserve.  
 But from the goddess how may this be hid ?  
 The tyrant too I fear, when he shall find  
 The statue on its marble base no more.  
 What then from death will save me ? What excuse

Shall I devise? Yet by one daring deed  
Might these things be achieved, couldst thou bear  
hence

The image, me too in thy gallant bark  
Placing secure, how glorious were th' attempt !  
Me if thou join not with thee, I am lost  
Indeed ; but thou, with prudent measures formed,  
Return. I fly no danger, not e'en death,  
Be death required, to save thee. No : the man  
Dying is mourned as to his house a loss ;  
But woman's weakness is of light esteem.

*restes.* I would not be the murderer of my mother,  
And of thee too ; sufficient is her blood.  
No ; I will share thy fortune, live with thee,  
Or with thee die : to Argos I will lead thee,  
If here I perish not ; or dying here  
Remain with thee. But what my mind suggests  
Hear : if Diana were averse to this,  
How could the voice of Phœbus from his shrine  
Declare that to the state of Pallas hence  
The statue of the goddess I should bear,  
And see thy face? All this together weighed  
Gives hope of fair success, and our return.

*hig.* But how effect it, that we neither die,  
And what we wish achieve? For our return  
On this depends : this claims deliberate thought.

*restes.* Have we not means to work the tyrant's death?

*hig.* For strangers full of peril were th' attempt.

*restes.* Thee would it save and me, it must be dared.

*hig.* I could not : yet thy promptness I approve.

*restes.* What if thou lodge me in the shrine concealed?

*hig.* That in the shades of night we may escape?

*restes.* Night is a friend to frauds, the light to truth.

*hig.* Within are sacred guards ; we 'scape not them.

*restes.* Ruin then waits us : how can we be saved?

*hig.* I think I have some new and safe device.

*restes.* What is it? Let me know : impart thy thought.

*hig.* Thy sufferings for my purpose I will use.

*restes.* To form devices quick is woman's wit.

*hig.* And say, thy mother slain thou fledst from Argos.

*restes.* If to aught good, avail thee of my ills.

*hig.* Unmeet then at this shrine to offer thee.

*Orestes.* What cause alleged? I reach not thine intent.

*Iphig.* As now impure: when hallowed, I will slay thee.

*Orestes.* How is the image thus more promptly gained?

*Iphig.* Thee I will hallow in the ocean waves.

*Orestes.* The statue we would gain is in the temple.

*Iphig.* That, by thy touch polluted, I would cleanse.

*Orestes.* Where? On the wat'ry margin of the main?

*Iphig.* Where thy tall bark secured with cables rides.

*Orestes.* And who shall bear the image in his hands?

*Iphig.* Myself: profaned by any touch but mine.

*Orestes.* What of this blood shall on my friend be charged?

*Iphig.* His hands, it shall be said, like thine are stained.

*Orestes.* In secret this, or to the king disclosed?

*Iphig.* With his assent; I cannot hide it from him.

*Orestes.* My bark with ready oars attends thee near.

*Iphig.* That all be well appointed be thy charge.

*Orestes.* One thing alone remains, that these conceal  
Our purpose: but address them, teach thy tongue

Persuasive words: a woman hath the power

To melt the heart to pity: thus perchance

All things may to our warmest wish succeed.

*Iphig.* Ye train of females, to my soul most dear,  
On you mine eyes are turned, on you depends  
My fate: with prosperous fortune to be blest,  
Or to be nothing, to my country lost,  
Of a dear kinsman and a much loved brother  
Deprived. This plea I first would urge, that we  
Are women, and have hearts by nature formed  
To love each other, of our mutual trusts  
Most firm preservers. Touching our design  
Be silent, and assist our flight; nought claims  
More honour than the faithful tongue. You see  
How the same fortune links us three, most dear  
Each to the other, to revisit safe

Our country, or to die. If I am saved,

That thou mayst share my fortune, I to Greece

Will bring thee safe: but thee by this right hand,

Thee I conjure, and thee; by this loved cheek

Thee, by thy knees, by all that in your house

Is dearest to you, father, mother, child,

If you have children. What do you reply?

Which of you speaks assent? Or which dissents?

But be you all assenting: for my plea  
If you approve not, ruin falls on me,  
And my unhappy brother too must die.

*Chorus.* Be confident, loved lady, and consult  
Only thy safety: all thou givst in charge,  
Be witness, mighty Jove, I will conceal.  
*Fig.* Oh for this generous promise be you blest!  
To enter now the temple be thy part,  
And thine: for soon the monarch of the land  
Will come, inquiring if the strangers yet  
Have bowed their necks as victims at the shrine.—  
Goddess revered, who in the dreadful bay  
Of Aulis from my father's slaughtering hand  
Didst save me, save me now, and these; through thee  
Else will the voice of Phoebus be no more  
Held true by mortals: from this barbarous land  
To Athens go propitious; here to dwell  
Beseems thee not: thine be a polished state!

CHORUS.

*Strophe 1.*

O bird, that round each craggy height  
Projecting o'er the sea below,  
Wheelest thy melancholy flight,  
Thy song attuned to notes of woe;  
The wise thy tender sorrows own,  
Which thy lost lord unceasing moan:  
Like thine, sad Halcyon, be my strain,  
A bird that have no wings to fly:  
With fond desire for Greece I sigh,  
And for my much loved social train;  
Sigh for Diana, pitying maid,  
Who joys to rove o'er Cynthus' heights,  
Or in the branching laurel's shade,  
Or in the soft-haired palm delights,  
Or the hoar olive's sacred boughs,  
Lenient of sad Latona's woes,  
Or in the lake that rolls its wave  
Where swans their plumage love to lave,  
Then to the Muses soaring high,  
The homage pay of melody.



*Antistrophe 1.*

Ye tears, what frequent-falling showers  
 Rolled down these cheeks in streams of w  
 When in the dust my country's towers  
 Lay levelled by the conquering foe;  
 And, to their spears a prey, their oars  
 Brought me to these barbaric shores!  
 For gold exchanged, a traffic base,  
 No vulgar slave, the task is mine  
 Here at Diana's awful shrine,  
 Who loves the woodland hind to chase,  
 The virgin priestess to attend,  
 Daughter of rich Mycenæ's lord;  
 At other shrines her wish to bend,  
 Where bleeds the victim less abhorred;  
 No respite to her griefs she knows,  
 Not so the heart inured to woes,  
 As trained to sorrow's rigid lore:  
 Now comes a change, it mourns no more.  
 But to long bliss when all succeeds  
 The anguished heart for ever bleeds.

*Strophe 2.*

Thee, loved virgin, freed from fear  
 Home the Argive bark shall bear:  
 Mountain Pan, with shrilling strain,  
 To the oars that dash the main  
 In just cadence well agreed,  
 Shall accord his wax joined reed:  
 Phœbus, with a prophet's fire  
 Sweeping o'er his seven stringed lyre,  
 And his voice attuning high  
 To the swelling harmony,  
 Thee shall guide the wild waves o'er  
 To the soft Athenian shore.  
 Leaving me, thy oars shall sweep  
 Eager o'er the foaming deep;  
 Thou shalt catch the rising gales  
 Swelling in thy firm bound sails,  
 And thy bark in gallant pride  
 Light shall o'er the billows glide.

*Antistrophe 2.*

Might I through the lucid air  
Fly where rolls yon flaming car,  
O'er these loved and modest bowers,  
Where I passed my youthful hours,  
I would stay my weary flight,  
Wave no more my pennons light,  
But amidst the virgin band,  
Once my loved companions, stand :  
Once 'midst them my charms could move,  
Blooming then, the flames of love,  
When the mazy dance I trod,  
Whilst with joy my mother glowed ;  
When to vie in grace was mine,  
And in splendid robes to shine ;  
For with radiant tints imprest  
Glowed for me the gorgeous vest ;  
And these tresses gave new grace,  
As their ringlets shade my face.

## THOAS, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

*Thoas.* Where is the Grecian lady, to whose charge  
This temple is committed? Have her rites  
Hallowed the strangers? Do their bodies burn  
In the recesses of the sacred shrine?

*Chorus.* She comes, and will inform thee, king, of all.

*Thoas.* Daughter of Agamemnon, what means this!  
The statue of the goddess in thine arms  
Why dost thou bear from its firm base removed?

*Iphig.* There in the portal, monarch, stay thy step.

*Thoas.* What of strange import in the shrine hath chanced?

*Iphig.* Things ominous: that word I, holy, speak.

*Thoas.* To what is tuned thy proem? Plainly speak.

*Iphig.* Not pure the victims, king, you lately seized.

*Thoas.* What showed thee this? Or speakest thou but thy  
thought?

*Iphig.* Back turned the sacred image on its base.

*Thoas.* Spontaneous turned, or by an earthquake moved?

*Iphig.* Spontaneous; and, averted, closed its eyes.

*Thoas.* What was the cause? The blood-stained strangers'  
guilt?

*Iphig.* That and nought else; for horrible their deeds.

*Thoas.* What, have they slain some Scythian on the shore?

*Iphig.* They came polluted with domestic blood.

*Thoas.* What blood? I have a strong desire to know.

*Iphig.* They slew their mother with confederate swords.

*Thoas.* O Phœbus! This hath no barbarian dared.

*Iphig.* All Greece indignant chased them from her realms.

*Thoas.* Bearst thou for this the image from the shrine?

*Iphig.* To the pure air, from stain of blood removed.

*Thoas.* By what means didst thou know the strangers' guilt?

*Iphig.* I learned it as the statue started back.

*Thoas.* Greece trained thee wise: this well hast thou discerned.

*Iphig.* Now with sweet blandishments they soothe my soul.

*Thoas.* Some glozing tale from Argos telling thee?

*Iphig.* I have one brother: he, they say, lives happy.

*Thoas.* That thou mayst save them for their pleasing news?

*Iphig.* And that my father lives, by fortune blessed.

*Thoas.* But on the goddess well thy thoughts are turned.

*Iphig.* I hate all Greece; for it hath ruined me.

*Thoas.* What with the strangers, say then, should be done?

*Iphig.* The law ordained in reverence we must hold.

*Thoas.* Are then thy lavers ready, and the sword?

*Iphig.* First I would cleanse them with ablutions pure.

*Thoas.* In fountain waters, or the ocean wave?

*Iphig.* All man's pollutions doth the salt sea cleanse.

*Thoas.* More holy to the goddess will they bleed.

*Iphig.* And better what I have in charge advance.

*Thoas.* Doth not the wave e'en 'gainst the temple beat?

*Iphig.* This requires solitude: more must I do.

*Thoas.* Lead where thou wilt: on secret rites I pry not.

*Iphig.* The image of the goddess I must cleanse.

*Thoas.* If it be stained with touch of mother's blood.

*Iphig.* I could not else have borne it from its base.

*Thoas.* Just is thy provident and pious thought:

For this by all the state thou art revered.

*Iphig.* Knowst thou what next I would?

*Thoas.* To signify. "Tis thine thy will

*Iphig.* Give for these strangers chains.

*Thoas.* To what place can they fly?

- Iphig.* A Grecian knows  
Nought faithful.
- Thoas.* Of my train go some for chains.
- Iphig.* Let them lead forth the strangers.
- Thoas.* Be it so.
- Iphig.* And veil their faces.
- Thoas.* From the sun's bright beams?
- Iphig.* Some of thy train send with me.
- Thoas.* These shall go  
Attending thee.
- Iphig.* One to the city send.
- Thoas.* With what instructions charged?
- Iphig.* That all remain  
Within their houses.
- Thoas.* That the stain of blood  
They meet not?
- Iphig.* These things have pollution in them.
- Thoas.* Go thou, and bear th' instructions.
- Iphig.* That none come  
In sight.
- Thoas.* How wisely careful for the city!
- Iphig.* Warn our friends most.
- Thoas.* This speaks thy care for me.
- Iphig.* Stay thou before the shrine.
- Thoas.* To what intent?
- Iphig.* Cleanse it with lustral fires.
- Thoas.* That thy return  
May find it pure?
- Iphig.* But when the strangers come  
Forth from the temple.
- Thoas.* What must I then do?
- Iphig.* Spread o'er thine eyes a veil.
- Thoas.* That I receive not  
Pollution?
- Iphig.* Tedious if my stay appear.
- Thoas.* What bounds may be assigned?
- Iphig.* Deem it not strange.
- Thoas.* At leisure what the rites require perform.
- Iphig.* May this lustration as I wish succeed.
- Thoas.* Thy wish is mine.
- Iphig.* But from the temple, see,  
The strangers come, the sacred ornaments,

## Euripides

The hallowed lambs, for I with blood must wash  
This execrable blood away, the light  
Of torches, and what else my rites require  
To purify these strangers to the goddess.  
But to the natives of this land my voice  
Proclaims, from this pollution far remove,  
Art thou attendant at the shrine, who liftest  
Pure to the gods thy hands, or nuptial rites  
Dost thou prepare, or pregnant matron, hence  
Be gone, that this defilement none may touch.  
Thou, daughter of Latona and high Jove,  
O royal virgin, if I cleanse the stain  
Of these, and where I ought with holy rites  
Address thee, thou shalt hold thy residence  
In a pure mansion; we too shall be blest!  
More though I speak not, goddess, unexpressed  
All things to thee and to the gods are known.

*orus.* Latona's glorious offspring claims the song,  
Born the hallowed shades among  
Where fruitful Delos winds her valleys low;  
Bright-haired Phœbus skilled t' inspire  
Raptures as he sweeps the lyre,  
And she that glories in th' unerring bow.  
From the rocky ridges steep,  
At whose foot the hushed waves sleep,  
Left their far-famed native shore,  
Them th' exulting mother bore  
To Parnassus, on whose heights  
Bacchus shouting holds his rites;  
Glitt'ring in the burnished shade,  
By the laurel's branches made,  
Where th' enormous dragon lies,  
Brass his scales, and flame his eyes,  
Earth-born monster, that around  
Rolling guards th' oracular ground:  
Him, while yet a sportive child  
In his mother's arms that smiled,  
Phœbus slew, and seized the shrine  
Whence proceeds the voice divine;  
On the golden tripod placed,  
Throne by falsehood ne'er disgraced,  
Where Castalia's pure stream flows,

He the fates to mortals shows.  
But when Themis, whom of yore  
Earth, her fruitful mother, bore,  
From her hallowed seat he drove,  
Earth t' avenge her daughter strove,  
Forming visions of the night,  
Which, in rapt dreams hov'ring light,  
All that Time's dark volumes hold  
Might to mortal sense unfold,  
When in midnight's sable shades  
Sleep the silent couch invades :  
Thus did Earth her vengeance boast.  
His prophetic honours lost,  
Royal Phœbus speeds his flight  
To Olympus, on whose height  
At the throne of Jove he stands,  
Stretching forth his little hands,  
Suppliant that the Pythian shrine  
Feel no more the wrath divine ;  
That the goddess he appease,  
That her nightly visions cease.  
Jove with smiles beheld his son  
Early thus address his throne,  
Suing with ambitious pride  
O'er the rich shrine to preside :  
He assenting bowed his head.  
Straight the nightly visions fled ;  
And prophetic dreams no more  
Hovered slumb'ring mortals o'er :  
Now to Phœbus given again  
All his honours pure remain ;  
Votaries distant regions send  
His frequented throne t' attend,  
And the firm decrees of fate  
On his faithful voice await.

MESSENGER, CHORUS.

*Mess.* Say you, that keep the temple and attend  
The altar, where is Thoas, Scythia's king ?  
Open these strong-compacted gates, and call  
Forth from the shrine the monarch of the land.

*Chorus.* Wherefore? At thy command if I must speak.

*Mess.* The two young men are gone, through the device  
Of Agamemnon's daughter; from this land  
They fly, and in their Grecian galley placed  
The sacred image of the goddess bear.

*Chorus.* Incredible thy tale: but whom thou seekest  
The monarch from the temple went in haste.

*Mess.* Whither? For what is doing he should know.

*Chorus.* We know not: but go thou and seek for him:  
Where'er thou find him, thou wilt tell him this.

*Mess.* See, what a faithless race you women are!  
In all that hath been done you have a part.

*Chorus.* Sure thou art mad? What with the strangers'  
flight

Have we to do? But wilt thou not with all  
The speed thou mayst go to the monarch's house?

*Mess.* Not till I first am well informed if here  
Within the temple be the king or not.  
Unbar the gates: to you within I speak;  
And tell your lord that at the portal here  
I stand, and bring him tidings of fresh ills.

#### THOAS, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

*Thoas.* Who at the temple of the goddess dares  
This clamour raise, and thund'ring at the gates  
Strikes terror through the ample space within?

*Mess.* With falsehoods would these women drive me hence,  
Without to seek thee: thou wast in the shrine.

*Thoas.* With what intent? Or what advantage sought?

*Mess.* Of these hereafter: what more urgent now  
Imports thee, hear: the virgin, in this place  
Presiding at the altars, from this land  
Is with the strangers fled, and bears with her  
The sacred image of the goddess: all  
Of her ablutions but a false pretence.

*Thoas.* How sayst thou? What is her accursed design?

*Mess.* To save Orestes: this too will amaze thee.

*Thoas.* Whom? What Orestes? Clytemnestra's son?

*Mess.* Him at the altar hallowed now to bleed.

*Thoas.* Portentous! For what less can it be called?

*Mess.* Think not on that, but hear me; with deep thought

Reflect ; weigh well what thou shalt hear, devise  
By what pursuit to reach and seize the strangers.

*Thoas.* Speak : thou advisest well ; the sea though nigh,  
They fly not so as to escape my spear.

*Mess.* When to the shore we came, where stationed rode  
The galley of Orestes by the rocks  
Concealed, to us, whom thou hadst sent with her  
To hold the strangers' chains, the royal maid  
Made signs that we retire, and stand aloof,  
As if with secret rites she would perform  
The purposed expiation : on she went  
In her own hands holding the strangers' chains  
Behind them : not without suspicion this,  
Yet by thy servants, king, allowed. At length,  
That we might deem her in some purpose high  
Employed, she raised her voice, and chaunted loud  
Barbaric strains, as if with mystic rites  
She cleansed the stain of blood. When we had sate  
A tedious while, it came into our thought  
That from their chains unloosed the stranger youths  
Might kill her, and escape by flight ; yet fear  
Of seeing what we ought not kept us still  
In silence ; but at length we all resolved  
To go, though not permitted, where they were.  
There we behold the Grecian bark, with oars  
Well furnished, winged for flight ; and at their seats  
Grasping their oars were fifty rowers ; free  
From chains beside the stern the two youths stood.  
Some from the prow relieved the keel with poles ;  
Some weighed the anchors up ; the climbing ropes  
Some hastened, through their hands the cables drew,  
Launched the light bark, and gave her to the main.  
But when we saw their treacherous wiles, we rushed  
Heedless of danger, seized the priestess, seized  
The halsers, hung upon the helm, and strove  
To rend the rudder-bands away. Debate  
Now rose : " What mean you, sailing o'er the seas,  
The statue and the priestess from the land  
By stealth conveying ? Whence art thou, and who,  
That bearest her, like a purchased slave, away ?"  
He said : " I am her brother, be of this  
Informed, Orestes, son of Agamemnon ;



My sister, so long lost, I bear away,  
Recovered here." But nought the less for that  
Held we the priestess, and by force would lead  
Again to thee ; hence dreadful on our cheeks  
The blows ; for in their hands no sword they held,  
Nor we ; but many a rattling stroke the youths  
Dealt with their fists, against our sides and breasts  
Their arms fierce darting, till our battered limbs  
Were all disabled. Now with dreadful marks  
Disfigured up the precipice we fly,  
Some bearing on their heads, some in their eyes  
The bloody bruises ; standing on the heights  
Our fight was safer, and we hurled at them  
Fragments of rocks ; but standing on the stern  
The archers with their arrows drove us thence.  
And now a swelling wave rolled in, which drove  
The galley tow'ards the land ; the sailors feared  
The sudden swell. On his left arms sustained  
Orestes bore his sister through the tide,  
Mounted the bark's tall side, and on the deck  
Safe placed her, and Diana's holy image  
Which fell from heaven : from the midship his voice  
He sent aloud, " Ye youths, that in this bark  
From Argos ploughed the deep, now ply your oars,  
And dash the billows till they foam : those things  
Are ours, for which we swept the Euxine sea,  
And steered our course within its clashing rocks."  
They gave a cheerful shout, and with their oars  
Dashed the salt wave. The galley, whilst it rode  
Within the harbour, worked its easy way ;  
But having passed its mouth, the swelling flood  
Rolled on it, and with sudden force the wind  
Impetuous rising drove it back ; their oars  
They slackened not, stoutly struggling 'gainst the wave ;  
But tow'ards the land the reluctant flood impelled  
The galley ; then the royal virgin stood,  
And prayed : " O daughter of Latona, save me,  
Thy priestess save ; from this barbaric land  
To Greece restore me, and forgive my thefts ;  
For thou, O goddess, dost thy brother love,  
Deem then that I love those allied to me."  
The mariners responsive to her prayer

Shouted loud pæans, and their naked arms,  
Each cheering each, to their stout oars apply.  
But nearer, and yet nearer to the rock  
The galley drove ; some rushed into the sea,  
Some strained the ropes that bind the loosened sails.  
Straight was I hither sent to thee, O king,  
T' inform thee of these accidents. But haste,  
Take chains and gyves with thee ; for if the flood  
Subside not to a calm, there is no hope  
Of safety to the strangers. Be assured  
That Neptune, awful monarch of the main,  
Remembers Troy, and, hostile to the race  
Of Pelops, will deliver to thy hands,  
And to thy people, as is meet, the son  
Of Agamemnon ; and bring back to thee  
His sister, who the goddess hath betrayed,  
Unmindful of the blood at Aulis shed.

*Chorus.* Unhappy Iphigenia, thou must die,  
Thy brother too must die, if thou again,  
Seized in thy flight, to thy lord's hands shalt come.

*Thoas.* Inhabitants of this barbaric land,  
Will you not rein your steeds, will you not fly  
Along the shore, to seize whate'er this skiff  
Of Greece casts forth, and for your goddess roused  
Hunt down these impious men ? Will you not launch  
Instant your swift-oared barks, by sea, by land  
To catch them, from the rugged rock to hurl  
Their bodies, or impale them on the stake ?  
But for you women, in these dark designs  
Accomplices, hereafter, as I find  
Convenient leisure, I will punish you.  
Th' occasion urges now, and gives no pause.

*Minerva.* Whither, O royal Thoas, dost thou lead  
This vengeful chase ? Attend ; Minerva speaks.  
Cease thy pursuit, and stop this rushing flood  
Of arms ; for hither by the fateful voice  
Of Phœbus came Orestes, warned to fly  
The anger of the Furies, to convey  
His sister to her native Argos back,  
And to my land the sacred image bear.  
Thoas, I speak to thee : him, whom thy rage  
Would kill, Orestes, on the wild waves seized,

Neptune, to do me grace, already wafts  
 On the smooth sea, the swelling surges calmed.  
 And thou, Orestes (for my voice thou hearest,  
 Though distant far), to my commands attend:  
 Go, with the sacred image, which thou bearest,  
 And with thy sister: but when thou shalt come  
 To Athens, built by gods, there is a place  
 On th' extreme borders of the Attic land,  
 Close neigb'ring to Carystia's craggy height,  
 Sacred, my people call it Aie: there  
 A temple raise, and fix the statue there,  
 Which from the Tauric goddess shall receive  
 Its name, and from thy toils, which thou, thro'  
 Greece

Driven by the Furies' madd'ning stings, hast born  
 And mortals shall in future times with hymns  
 The Tauric goddess there, Diana, hail.  
 And be this law established, when the feast  
 For thy deliverance from this shrine is held,  
 To a man's throat that they apply the sword,  
 And draw the blood, in memory of these rites,  
 That of her honours nought the goddess lose.  
 Thou, Iphigenia, on the hallowed heights  
 Of Brauron on this goddess shalt attend  
 Her priestess, dying shalt be there interred,  
 Graced with the honours of the gorgeous vests  
 Of finest texture, in their houses left  
 By matrons who in childbed pangs expired.  
 These Grecian dances back to their country lead,  
 I charge thee: justice this return demands;  
 For I saved thee, when on the mount of Mars  
 The votes were equal: and from that decree,  
 The shells in number equal, still absolve.  
 But, son of Agamemnon, from this land  
 Thy sister bear; nor, Theos, be thou angry.

*Theos.* Royal Minerva, he that hears the gods  
 Commanding, and obeys not, is unwise.  
 My anger 'gainst Orestes flames no more,  
 Gone though he be, and bears with him away  
 The statue of the goddess, and his sister.  
 Have mortals glory 'gainst the powerful gods  
 Contending? Let them go, and to thy land

The sacred image bear, and fix it there ;  
Good fortune go with them. To favoured Greece  
These dames, at thy high bidding, I will send.  
My arms will I restrain, which I had raised  
Against the strangers, and my swift-oared barks,  
Since, potent goddess, this is pleasing to thee.

*Minerva.* I praise thy resolution ; for the power  
Of fate o'er thee and o'er the gods prevails.  
Breathe soft ye fav'ring gales, to Athens bear  
These sprung from Agamemnon ; on their course  
Attending I will go, and heedful save  
My sister's sacred image. You too go [*to the CHORUS*]  
Prosperous, and in the fate that guards you blest.

*Chorus.* O thou, among th' immortal gods revered,  
And mortal men, Minerva, we will do  
As thou commandest ; for with transport high,  
Exceeding hope, our ears receive thy words.  
O Victory, I revere thy awful power :  
Guard thou my life, nor ever cease to crown me !